The White Man's Burden

T. Shirby Hodge

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The White Man's Burden

A SATIRICAL FORECAST

By

T. SHIRBY HODGE

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The White Man's Burden

CHAPTER I

BEWILDERMENT

I COULD not make out at all what had happened to me. Here I was, not a solitary living thing in sight, plodding along under a scorching sun, in a region entirely unknown to me. The landscape, the vegetation, the air itself seemed strange, and I stopped a while, notwithstanding the heat and the lack of shelter, to look about me, collect my wits, and try to make out where I was, and how I came to be there. A cursory survey of my surroundings showed that I was on a broad plain, extending behind me as far as I could see. I must have traveled over this level ground for many miles to reach the place where I was standing. To the left I could just make out a blue streak along the horizon, which I thought might be distant hills, or perhaps water, a lake, or it might be, the sea. Toward the right I could see, also in the far distance, what were unmistakably

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hills, with rounded tops and appearing to be clad with forests. In front of me, and much nearer than the hills to the right were other hills, not very high, verdant with foliage, and cleft with many valleys, in one or two of which I thought I caught glimpses of water falls. These hills did not seem to be more than a mile or so away, and the prospect of reaching the shade of the trees so soon afforded me great relief, for I was really suffering from the heat, and felt both hungry and thirsty. I might find fruit and was sure to find water. Meanwhile, as I felt very tired, I could endure to rest a while before I went on farther. The plain over which I was traveling was covered with grass, five or six inches high, and although this was somewhat brown and dry, my seat was comfortable enough. The sun was pretty high, and it seemed to me that I must be not far from the equator. At any rate it was a little past midday, though I found to my surprise and consternation that I had no watch. Now I always carried a watch wherever I went and felt lost without one. I could not have left it at home, and I must have lost it somewhere or perhaps have been robbed. And now I began again to think of things more practical. Where was I? How did I come to be here?

I must have walked, and I could remember nothing at all of my journey. I seemed to have

been dropped there, perhaps carried there by somebody and abandoned. Kidnapped perhaps. But I remembered no such performance; I had suffered no violence, and I had not been robbed, unless of my watch. There was money in my pocket, a pocket knife, and to my great relief a revolver, which I had taken into the country when I began my vacation. That I remembered distinctly — going up into New Hampshire to spend my vacation on a farm. And that was the last thing I could remember until I suddenly found myself in my present predicament. What had occurred in this interval?

For a time I cudgeled my brain in vain. Finally I came to the conclusion that I must have developed a double consciousness, and had been masquerading somewhere as a different person from my true self. I had read of such cases, and it seemed at the time to be the only explanation of my situation. That would account for the blank in my consciousness, and also for the fact, that I found myself in a new and strange locality. But my true self had returned to consciousness and now I remembered perfectly who I was, and where I was, when this alien personality or second consciousness had taken possession of me. My life came back to me true and clear.

I was born in New York City, educated at Yale,

and was just starting out in the world as clerk in the Barclay National Bank, with a good chance for advancement if I could prove my worth. This summer I had taken my vacation in July, and gone up to a farmhouse near Lake Sunapee to spend it. The weather had been rather torrid since my arrival, and — and — at this point I lost track of myself.

To account for this gap in my recollection I was absolutely at sea. No, stop! I did remember telling my landlady after breakfast that I was going out presently to watch the men at work in the hayfield. But I must have gone somewhere else, probably to the railroad station, two miles away, and then come on here. But where? That I must find out forthwith.

All of this self-communion had taken me about two minutes. At the very instant, apparently, when I recovered consciousness, or my own consciousness (if I had a double one) I had stopped in my tracks to take my bearings, and now, as the sun was pretty hot, and I was tired, I set out, without further delay, for the green hills and shady woods I saw not far ahead. I plodded along, expecting every minute to come upon some path or road which I might follow and so perhaps arrive at some house or meet somebody of whom I might make inquiry as to my whereabouts. But

I had no such luck. I was in a pathless wilderness, and I was puzzled to imagine in what part of the country I could be. As I have already said, I inferred from the height of the sun that I was considerably further south than New Hampshire and the course I was taking was toward the west, so that the water I thought I saw at a distance on the left was south of my present position. I thought it probable that I was somewhere in the southwestern part of the United States, and that the water might be a loop or bend of the Mississippi, or possibly the Colorado, or some of the bayous of Louisiana, I was entirely unacquainted with that part of the country, and had not the remotest idea how it looked. Maybe I was on the "Staked Plains."

Presently, as I neared the hill for which I was making, I spied, a few hundred feet ahead, in the direction in which I was going, a flash of light from a point near the ground, that looked like the reflection of sunlight from some bright object hidden in the grass. A few steps more and it vanished. Yet a few more, and there was another flash, not quite in the same place. What could it be? It suggested a gun, but I could see nobody, and there was no motion, as of a moving body, in the grass. Perhaps it was an old tin can left by some picnic party, though why anyone should picnic in such

a place was not easy to understand. However, there was nothing for me to do but to march up and find out what it was. It might help me to clear up the mystery of my whereabouts, at all events, and no matter what it might turn out to be, I could not be much worse off than I was now. As these thoughts were running through my mind, I was drawing nearer to the spot from which the flashes had seemed to come, and now I began to be able to distinguish their source. I could make out a sort of dun colored object, lying low in the grass, and having a decidedly artificial appearance, which became more and more evident as I approached. At length I reached the spot, and found that the object that had attracted my attention was a dark brownish red mass, shaped like a flattish dome, and looking as if it might be the upper part of a large globe, the greater portion being under the surface of the ground. The portion that was visible was eight or ten feet in diameter and perhaps ten inches high in the center, thus forming a segment of a sphere of huge dimensions. At various points irregularly distributed over the surface were small spots ground flat, highly polished, which reflected the sun's rays at various angles, these flashes of light having first attracted my notice. The mass appeared as if it were made of some hard gum or composition, like gutta

percha or vulcanized rubber, and as if it had been roughly daubed on some structure underneath, though the polished surfaces had a metallic glint, somewhat bluish, and it did not take me long to find out that it was something I had never seen before, and of whose nature I was entirely ignorant. It encouraged me, though, for it showed that the region was inhabited, and as I rose from my brief examination and looked about for other signs of human kind, I saw another similar disc about a hundred feet away, and still another on the other side, and as I took a wide sweep of the plain, so far as I could see, were these little elevations, some showing dark and even black, from my standpoint, and others glittering with scintillations of light. I could not imagine what these things could be. I passed my hand over the nearest one. It was hard, coolish, and I fancied that I felt a slight trembling or vibration, something like that produced in a house when a heavy wagon passes on a stony street. This suggested the idea that it might be the roof of some sort of habitation. Could it be a cyclone cellar, such as I had read about as being constructed in certain parts of the country, where cyclones or tornadoes were to be expected? I looked carefully for an entrance, and circled about at various distances from it, to see if there were any signs of burrow-

ing, or of trap doors, but there was nothing. If these things really were cyclone cellars I must, in all probability, be somewhere in the southwestern United States.

I returned to the dome I had come to first, and struck it with my knuckles to see if it was hollow. It seemed to be solid, for there was no reverberation. Then I took my revolver from my pocket and hammered with that. There was still no reverberation, but, to my great surprise, there was the sound of a human voice, faint, as though very distant, but gradually becoming stronger. At length I caught words, and in a moment they were clear and distinct, and appeared to come from inside the dome.

"Who are you?" someone asked, and I replied:

"I am a stranger here, and have lost my way."

"Where are you from?"

"New York."

"Um-m! Wait a moment."

Well here was something to hold on to, anyway. A telephone, apparently, with a man at the other end, but a telephone of a new sort, of which I had never heard. It must be an experimental thing, I thought. Some obscure inventor has put it here to test it before he brings it out. Unless indeed my first idea was correct and the dome was

the roof of an underground habitation. I determined to test this again, and so I rapped upon it sharply with my pistol. In a moment I heard the same voice again.

"Well!"

"Where are you? Let me in."

"You cannot come in. There is no entrance."

"Then where are you?"

"I am many miles away. You are rapping on a solid sphere."

So it was a telephone, after all.

"We are sending you a guide."

"Thank you. Shall I wait here for him?"

"Walk on toward the hills eastward from where you are at present, and you will meet him in about half an hour."

"Eastward? Why, I was traveling toward the west. There was some mistake. I shouted again.

"You mean westward, don't you?"

No reply.

"I say, you mean west instead of east, do you not?"

Silence.

I rapped loudly, but could elicit no answer. Whoever was at the other end of the line had evidently gone away, and I was left to my meditations. However, I was encouraged and knew

that aid and information were near. The hills I was making for were evidently in the west. There was the sun, on my left hand, and the only other hills to be seen were in the opposite direction, to the north. Behind me was the endless plain. So I plodded on, revolving in my mind the structure, material and purpose of these curious objects that now lay behind me.

At length I reached the base of the hills that stretched for miles on either side, and skirted them for a short distance in each direction in search of a path, which I spied at length in one of the green valleys, running along with a gentle incline beside a clear stream of running water that made its way down and, to my astonishment, flowed into the plain I had just crossed, and not five hundred feet from the line I had traversed. So I had not been far from water all the time I had been so thirsty, and I could not help wondering that I had not discovered it before, but I suppose it flowed sluggishly through the almost level plain and was hidden by the grass. At any rate, I had missed it, and now I made haste to satisfy my thirst. I had to scoop it up in my hand, as Diogenes did when he had thrown away his cup, and found it deliciously cool and refreshing. Then having found a shady spot, not far from the brook, I sat down upon a moss-covered rock and looked

about me, while waiting for the guide to put in an appearance. I was sitting in the fringe of a deep forest. There were a few bushes between me and the lower ground, while ahead of me the path wound upward and was soon lost in the green undergrowth of a dense forest. The trees were not of the kinds with which I was familiar; there were no pines, hemlocks, spruces, maples, beeches or elms, and I could discover no fruit on any of them, nor any berries on the bushes, so I had to hold my hunger in abeyance until I should reach some human habitation.

CHAPTER II

A STRANGE RECEPTION

AND so I sat and waited, and it seemed that my fatigue combined with the balminess of the air, the refreshing shade, the solitude of the forest and the murmuring of the stream put me to sleep, for I awoke suddenly to the sound of a distant shout, followed by singing in a childish voice, and presently I saw a young negro lad coming down the path towards me. He was chanting some negro melody, it appeared, in a curious dialect, with a broad *a* sound predominating. Although it seemed to be English, it was English in such a distorted form, that I could only catch a word here and there, and his song was for me mostly a jumble. As he drew nearer he stopped the song and became silent, but came on down the descending path, dancing and swinging his arms in the instinctive and irrepressible manner of childhood. He was oddly clothed, too, although as I had never seen a southern negro at home, I could not say that his dress was unusual, and it was very

evident to me by this time that I had landed, after my wanderings, somewhere in the South — where I should now soon find out.

The boy, who seemed to be about ten years old, and very active, robust and well-built, was dark, but not coal black, and had on a tunic or blouse of white cloth, reaching to the knee, with a bright-red belt about the waist. His arms were bare to the shoulder, and he had nothing on his feet. As he approached I could not but admire the picture he presented of perfect health, intense vitality, and graceful movement, and the fine suggestion of supple muscularity, which would develop with advancing years. I may seem to exaggerate, but he reminded me of the beautiful bronze Mercury in the great Museum of Naples. "This is what comes," I said to myself, "of plain living and an outdoor life. What a fine lad!"

In a few minutes he was beside me and staring at me round-eyed as if I were some monstrous apparition, but I lost no time and immediately set about getting information as to my whereabouts.

"Where are we, boy?" I said. "What State is this; where did you come from and who are you?"

He continued to stare and I began to lose patience.

"Come, come, wake up. What are you star-

ing at?" said I; as he seemed to be a little frightened, I tried to reassure him.

"Don't stare at me so. I am not going to harm you. Tell me where I am, can't you?"

"I never saw a white man before," he replied. "You are the first one that ever came round here."

So, I thought, this must be in the Black Belt I have heard so much about, but how does this little nigger come to use such good language, with none of the darky accent or idioms? Is this one result of the Tuskegee business? I had never had any great faith in that, but somehow this little boy had certainly been well brought up, in spite of his bare feet and scanty clothing.

"Never saw a white man? Well, now you have seen one, loosen your tongue and tell me where I am and where you are going to take me."

"You are in Africa, sir, and my father sent me over to find you and bring you back to his house."

"Africa? This — Africa? Oh, I see, that is a nickname for some portion of the black belt, like Egypt in Illinois. But where are we going?"

"Over the hill to the east," he said; pointing in the direction whence he had come.

"To the east — why that is west."

"No, sir, that is east from here."

This boy must be half-witted, I thought, to myself, talking as he does about Africa and the east.

However, I was in his power. I did not know where I was and he did. I was hungry and he could take me where I could get food. I was eager for the company of human beings and even this boy was better than no one, and he could guide me to others, where I could procure rest and lodging. So we started on, the boy running and dancing ahead, and I following at a dignified distance, looking about as we progressed through the forest to see if I could recognize anything I saw. The boy ran on much like any other boy, making little side excursions among the bushes beside the path, apparently capturing a bug of some kind, now and then, or starting up a small bird, which flew away so quickly that I rather heard than saw it.

It began to be monotonous, and I was tired.

"How much farther have we to go?" I called out.

"Only a little way," he replied, "maybe half a mile."

On we plodded. I began to think it must be half a rustic mile, which may mean three or four miles, according to the section of country you happen to be in. But presently I was rejoiced to see that the forest looked thinner ahead. I could see glimpses of sky between the trees and it soon became evident that we were approaching an opening, a lake perhaps or else the end of the forest.

Suddenly I remembered the curious dome-like structure I had examined just before I entered the shade of the trees, and I asked the boy if he knew what they were.

"Yes," he said, "but I am not allowed to tell."

"Some new invention," I said, "just as I thought; somebody is making experiments with them."

"We can talk through them sometimes," replied the lad, and not a word more would he utter on the subject, though I plied him with questions for quite a while, and so we plodded on in silence.

The woods grew lighter and lighter, the sky clearer and brighter, and at length we emerged from the shadows of the trees, and stood upon the brow of a gentle slope, and looked out upon the most charming landscape I had ever beheld.

I was looking down upon a broad valley, bordered on either side by low sloping hills like the one on which we were standing. Straight ahead the landscape melted away in a far distant misty blue. The prevailing hue was green although here and there were patches of brown, red, blue and yellow, indications of cultivation and varied crops. To this variety of color were added the differing shades of green, from dark to light and from yellowish to bluish, forming altogether attractive contrasts of light, color and form. Scat-

tered here and there were patches of shrubbery and trees, fruit orchards and shade trees, and dotting the landscape all over, as far as the eye could see were dwellings as I took them to be, white, but not glaringly so, being tempered apparently by slight admixtures of gray or blue. There were within sight three or four large structures, that looked to me like public buildings of some sort, located as they were mostly on slight elevations, with imposing platforms and wide winding steps in front of them. The whole surface of the valley was gently undulating, and under the level rays of the setting sun presented a fairy scene.

The sun was getting low, and I now began to suspect that the lad was right when he insisted that we were headed toward the east, for so far as I had observed we had not altered our general direction since we started, and yet the sun was not in front of us, but behind, and the shadows of the trees under which we stood were cast along our path. There could be no doubt of it. We were looking toward the east, and the sun, while behind us, was at our left, and we were south of it. Somehow and somewhere I had crossed the equator and was now in the southern hemisphere. For a moment I was overwhelmed by the thought, and sank down upon the turf to think. What a wanderer I must have been! The boy was very likely right,

and we were in Africa. In Africa, very likely 8,000 or 10,000 miles from home. I felt in my pocket for money, and took it out to count. It did not take me long. One dollar and sixty-nine cents! Ten thousand miles from home, with $1.69! I was completely overcome, almost fainted, but was roused by the lad's voice.

"That is of no use here," he was saying.

"What is of no use?"

"That money," said he. "It's trash, no good."

"How am I ever going to get home again?" I murmured to myself in despair.

"My father will see that you get back to your own country," the boy replied. "Let us go on."

There was nothing for me to do but follow my guide, and so I rose slowly from the ground and we went on down the slope.

While we were halting on the brow of the hill, I had seen a few human figures moving about among the houses, and quite a multitude in front of one of the large edifices which I assumed were public buildings. As we advanced I saw that all of those who were near enough to be distinguished were black, or at least what we call "colored" in the United States.

"Are they all niggers here?" I said, as we plodded on.

The boy stopped instantly and with a dignity

I should have believed impossible in one of his age and race replied coldly:

"We do not use that word here, nor do we allow any man to use it to us."

"And what can you do to prevent it?" I replied rather hotly, a little nettled at being pulled up short by a pickaninny.

"I, myself, can at this moment do nothing. You are older and stronger than I. But I shall report your words to my father, and him you will have to obey."

"I've half a mind to give you a good thrashing for your impudence," I said, but regretted the outburst, when I came to consider that I was entirely at the mercy of these people until I could fall in with men of my own race and find shelter with them. The lad took no notice whatever of my last remark, excepting that he seemed to hurry his pace a little, as we approached the outlying houses of the settlement.

When we were within perhaps a hundred yards of one of the houses, a tall negro emerged from it and came slowly toward us.

"There is my father," cried the lad, and ran to meet him. They both stood still and waited for me as I advanced slowly, partly overcome with fatigue and partly uncertain of my reception.

His son had evidently already informed him of

my uncomplimentary remarks, for as we met his first words were:

"We are negroes, sir. Be advised and bear that in mind."

"I did not mean to offend," I replied. "The word is common enough in my country."

"Yes, yes, I know," said he, "but you will not use it here; but come into the house and get food and drink and sleep, for you are overcome with fatigue and hunger, and need them all," and he turned toward the house.

As we walked on I pondered much upon the extraordinary reception I had met with from a black man, and the still more extraordinary circumstances in which I found myself. I had not yet really found out where I was, nor how I got there, for the boy's few words had produced little impression. To be sure I knew now that I was in the southern hemisphere. I had satisfied myself as to that. And I might very well be in Africa, although I did not remember ever having heard or read of any such place as that in which I now was. My host, with his son, was ahead of me, and I had a good opportunity to scrutinize his person. He was above the middle height, perhaps five feet ten, and well proportioned, about forty years of age as near as I could judge, muscular in appearance, well nourished without the slightest tendency

toward corpulence, an oval face a little full, with a frank, open expression, and a penetrating eye. He had on a long, flowing garment, a sort of toga, thrown over his left shoulder, and reaching within six inches or so of the ground. His head was bare, with close-cropped wooly hair and no indication of baldness. His feet were bare, excepting for sandals.

"These people are evidently not savages," I said to myself, "but I must be a little careful of what I say or do, until I find out more about them."

We were now nearing the house and the negro turned to me and invited me again to enter, but I longed to see the face of one of my own kind and as politely as I could, I declined his invitation.

"You are very kind," I said, "and I appreciate it very much, but I wish you would please direct me to the house of some white man, where I can stay until I am able to make arrangements for my return home."

A benignant smile overspread his countenance as he answered me.

"There is not another white man within thousands of miles. You will have to accept of my hospitality, and we will all try to make you comfortable. You cannot leave at present. You will understand that you are not a prisoner. You are under no constraint, but you will find it both nec-

essary and convenient to remain with us for a few days. You are here for a purpose, of which you are entirely ignorant, but which will be explained to you to-morrow. For the present enter. You will find food and a bed within," and he led the way through the door into a large square room, which apparently was the chief room in the house, and of course, I could do nothing but follow him.

CHAPTER III

HOSPITALITY

IN one corner of this apartment sat a woman busily engaged with a hand loom. She rose as we entered and my host introduced her as his wife. She bowed slightly and called out to some person in another room. I could not understand what she said and yet her speech sounded strangely like English, but English so twisted and modified that it was almost unintelligible. I say almost, for I could distinguish a word here and there that I could understand.

A young girl of 13 or 14 made her appearance and brought in some dishes of food, which she deposited upon a table in the center of the room. My host politely indicated that I should eat, at the same time placing a chair for me at the table. I sat down without more ado and proceeded to do justice to a most excellent meal, although I partook of it alone. The food was simple but good, a meat stew, which I took to be mutton, fine bread and butter, with cheese and fruit of various kinds, sweet and acid. It was now growing dusk, and

candles were lighted and placed upon the table and on brackets attached to the walls, which filled the apartment with a mellow light. I noticed that the candlesticks appeared to be of a richer yellow than brass, but at the time did not suspect that they were made of gold.

While I was eating and drinking (an excellent red wine, by the way) little was said, and I had an opportunity to look about me. The woman had left the room, and the boy had skipped out into the kitchen to keep his sister company as soon as we entered the house. My host went to and fro, sometimes leaving the room for a few minutes at a time, and while he was with me spending most of the time at a front window, gazing out and apparently in deep thought.

I had noticed on entering that the house had no second story, but was broad and low. The room in which I was taking my meal was perhaps twenty feet square and eight feet high. The floor was of stone, the central portion being covered with matting in the form of rugs of a size to be easily handled for cleaning. The walls were painted with decorative panels, mostly representing flowers and landscapes, and I noticed particularly, with some surprise, that there were no corners or angles in the entire apartment, all points of junction being rounded off with great care. The ceiling seemed

to be of paneled stone work, so far as I could judge.

I finished my meal and addressed my host, determined to ascertain more about my whereabouts and, if possible, something about the remarkable chain of events that had brought me into my present predicament. So I said to him, with as diplomatic a manner as I was able to assume:

"Please tell me just what has happened to me, where I am, how I came here, who you all are, and what is going to become of me? I am, of course, helpless in your hands, if as you say, there are no white men in this vicinity, and I wish to be prepared to meet with courage whatever fate may have in store for me."

"Have no fears, sir, you will not be harmed in any way. In fact, I hope that your brief stay with us will be of advantage to you and to your race. But you are now in no condition to learn the truth about the matters you mention. You are exhausted, mentally and physically, and categorical answers to your questions would throw you into such a state that we might fear bad results. In the morning I will give you a full explanation. Some things I shall tell you will astonish you beyond measure and probably seem incredible, until you are gradually convinced of their truth. But now you must sleep. I will conduct you to your room."

" But," I replied, " I cannot sleep with this uncertainty harrowing my very soul, especially after your hints of dreadful things to come."

" I said nothing about dreadful things. They will be most pleasing and instructive, although very unexpected and amazing. You are to learn some things you never knew before."

" Oh, tell me now. I shall toss about all night if I am left in ignorance."

" Believe me, you will not. You will sleep well. I will see to that. But this conversation must cease. Follow me."

And there was nothing for me to do but to follow him, with my mind seething with indignation, wearied in body and soul, exasperated, defiant, but unhappily conscious of my helpless and desperate situation. We passed into a short corridor and thence into a small room, almost bare of furnishings. There was a window opening out of doors and another over the door, both guiltless of sash or glass. There really was no door, only a door opening. There was a screen, however, before the door, which effectually hid the room from the observation of any person outside. This screen was beautifully embroidered and seemed to me, who am not skilled in such matters, to be a real work of art. With a brief good night my host now left me, having deposited the candle on a

small stand on one side of the room. I should say that, before he left the room he called my attention to a night robe hanging from a hook in the wall, and to a bath room that opened from the further end of the room. There were two chairs in the place, a few clothes hooks upon the wall on one side, and on the other a large mirror that appeared to be a part of the wall, not built or let into the wall, but as if it were a part of the wall itself, and this I afterward found to be the case. There was not a sign of bed or bedstead, but there were soft thick mats upon the floor, and a hammock stretched across one corner, while underneath the hammock was a pile of large closely woven soft warm wraps that reminded me of Navajo blankets.

By this time I judged it to be nearly or quite nine o'clock, and I set about getting ready for bed immediately, but first I thought I would have a look at the bath room, and see what the prospects were in that direction. So I poked my head through the door, and gasped in astonishment. The bath was sunken in the floor, of ample dimensions and was lined with bright yellow metal, which had all the appearance of gold. But of course that was impossible. It was probably brass (the only other thing I could think of). I had never heard of a brass bath tub, but here was one evidently. I scrutinized it more closely. The lin-

ing was perfectly smooth, polished and without any indication of seam or joint. It had a deeper, richer hue than any brass I had ever seen, and I finally came to believe it really was made of gold. If so, my host must be a chief, at least, perhaps a king. It flashed upon my mind that I might be in Abyssinia and that this man was Menelik. But no, that was impossible. I was too far south, and besides there was no pomp in the dwelling, no officials, no retinue, no servants, and the house was clearly no palace. But it must be an immensely wealthy man who could afford gold baths.

While these thoughts were crowding each other in my mind I began to remove my clothing and prepare for the bath. There was no furniture in the room, but plenty of hooks and outstanding rods along the walls, and a profusion of towels. I was already half undressed, when I bethought myself of the water supply. At each end of the bath, at the bottom, was a wide mouth-like opening, flaring a little, reminding me of the mouth of an ancient tragic mask, and at one end, in the floor at the head of the bath were two small levers sticking up in the air at an angle. One end was evidently the handle and the other, beyond the bearing or fulcrum, was attached by a curious joint, half pin and half hinge, to an upright rod, which ran down through the floor. By each lever, in the floor it-

self, inlaid, was a letter, " H " and " C," which I took to mean Hot, and Cold, for these people evidently used English habitually. At any rate, I turned down the one marked " H " and such a gush of water followed, that I thought I had broken something, and turned it back in haste, when the flow instantly ceased, without any leaking. So I tried the other lever, and found it worked the same, and furnished, as I had supposed, warm, hot or cold water, at will. But there was no way to stop the outflow, no plug or stopper, and the water ran out as fast as it came in. At the lever end or head of the bath there was a slight ridge or bulge of the bottom, crosswise, that acted as a sort of dam, and threw the water a little upwards as it rushed out, like a reef in a running stream.

It was evident that the bath could not be filled like the tubs I had been accustomed to, and so divesting myself of the rest of my clothing, I stepped in and turned on the water, which tore through the little sluice gates in a rushing torrent, and out through the lower end.

" Terrible waste of water," I thought, " but that does not concern me," and I proceeded with the most delightful bath I ever had in my life. I was bathing in a running stream, about two inches deep, slipping swiftly over a floor of gold. It seemed

the very height of luxury. The water was just of the right warmth, clear and pure, and all the dust and dirt of my long tramp was whirled away in a flash, so that when I had finished, and turned the water off, the bath remained as clear and fine as when I entered it. The towels were a luxury in themselves, so soft and fine were they. I was now greatly refreshed and was soon ready for bed. After pondering the matter a while, I concluded to sleep on the floor instead of taking to the hammock, and so after spreading some of the blankets in such a way as to make a soft place to lie on, I wrapped myself in others and lay down.

I anticipated a sleepless night, for my brain was all in a whirl. The strangeness of my surroundings had unnerved me. I had not yet obtained really the slightest clue to where I was, how I got there, who my host was, what was to be done with me, or how I was to get home again. To be sure, nothing had so far happened to cause me to fear or to anticipate any future trouble. I had been received with courtesy, and aside from the fact that I was in a country of blacks and actually the guest of a negro, there was nothing to cause me any annoyance. And yet what could I make of the cryptic utterances of my host? What could he have meant by saying that he had things to tell me in the morning that would astonish me and probably

tax my credulity? There had seemed to me, for an instant, while he was speaking, to be a veiled hint of things unpleasant for me to learn. But what was the use of all this conjecture? I should learn all about it in the morning. Just now I was comfortable enough, and I must sleep. I listened for a few minutes attentively to hear if anyone were prowling about. There was not the slightest sound. It was quiet as a house of the dead. I began to feel warm and cosy as I tucked the blanket under my chin, my thoughts began to wander, and all of a sudden I opened my eyes and behold, it was morning. A bird was singing not far from my window, the room was light as day, and cool with the freshness of the dawn. I unwrapped the blankets and rose from the floor, where I had had a good night's rest. I felt entirely recovered from my fatigue, my head was clear, I felt a ravenous appetite, and was ready for anything that might happen.

It did not take me long to dress, and as I heard no one stirring outside, I took the opportunity to look about a little more narrowly than I had felt like doing the night before. First, I went into the bath room. Yes, the bath was lined with gold — of that there could be not the slightest doubt. In the outer room, my sleeping room — bedroom it could hardly be called, for it contained no bed

— I took up the candlestick, which I had examined curiously as I retired; it was also made of gold, and appeared to be solid and not plated, for it was quite heavy. It was severely simple, without ornament or chasing of any kind, and seemed to be in everyday use, and not brought out as a special honor to a guest of high degree, for such I naturally considered myself to be in this community of negroes. The walls I found to be built of blocks of stone, although they looked as if their surface was continuous, as if covered with smooth plaster, or hard finish. On close inspection the joints and lines of juncture could be discerned, although the separate stones were so cunningly ground and fitted to each other, that the lines between them barely showed. These lines represented extremely thin layers of some very finely grained cement, of the exact color of the stones, so that from a short distance away, the surface seemed to be unbroken. This beautiful work was an immense surprise to me, and caused me to modify my opinions of the character and nature of these people, with whom fortune had brought me into such close contact. Surely, even to conceive of such work, not to speak of its execution, these people must be more civilized than I had imagined. I examined the blankets, rugs and hammock, and found all their handiwork of the same perfect and

genuine character. There were no loose threads anywhere, no tags, no roughnesses, no sawlike edges, no projecting lumps, no evidences of imperfect threads, and the harmonies of color seemed to me, who am no connoisseur in such matters, to be admirable.

As I was completing my survey I heard someone say:

"Good morning, sir," from outside my door, and as I returned the salutation and stepped around the screen, I found my host standing there, with a broad smile upon his face and a hearty sympathy in his look, as he inquired how I had passed the night. I told him that I had slept like a top and was feeling fresh and fit for anything that might be in store for me, and we passed along the same corridor we had traversed the evening before and entered again the main room of the house.

He place a chair for me at the table, and then said:

"I am assuming, sir, that you are hungry after your night's rest."

I assured him that I was, and he left the room for a moment, returning with a dish of fruit, and a plate of bread with butter. Again he went to the rear and returned with a pot of hot coffee, with a jug of milk, and a third trip brought me a bowl of sugar and a saucer of honey.

I never enjoyed a breakfast more in my life. The coffee was delicious, the bread and butter equal to the best I ever tasted, and the gentle courtesy of my host suggested the service of the best waiter I had ever known. I afterwards had reason to wonder that, even for a moment, I had ever thought of him as a waiter attending to my wants, and felt much ashamed of it in retrospect.

"We have all had our first meal," said my host, "which is always a simple one like that which you, I hope, are enjoying."

I assured him that I was.

"All our meals are simple, and we seldom take them together. We have no family meals, as you have. Each one eats when he is hungry, and at no other time, and we have no habit of meeting to eat together, excepting when we have public gatherings, at which the meal is a negligible incident, and never the chief occasion of the meeting."

"Rather an unsocial practice," I remarked.

"Perhaps so, but it tends to prevent gluttony."

CHAPTER IV

INCREASING BEWILDERMENT

MY breakfast was soon finished, and we prepared to go out. I got my hat, and with my host, bare-headed as usual, started I knew not whither. He turned his steps toward the hills and the fringe of woods crowning them, from which I had emerged on the previous evening. As we walked along slowly I saw my guide, the ten year old lad, playing ball with a lot of other youngsters, and evidently having a hilarious time.

We passed along in silence until we reached the shade on the brow of the hill, and there we stopped and the negro signed to me to be seated. He threw himself down beside me, and remained for some minutes deep in thought, I meanwhile wondering after the cryptic utterances of the night before, what could be coming. At length he spoke.

"I thought it better to be somewhat retired during our preliminary talk, and so have brought you here. You are not at all prepared for what I am about to tell you, and I hardly know how to begin."

" But, first, let me ask," I said, " let me understand clearly where I am and how I got here, and above all, how I can get home again."

" I have already told you that you are in Africa. How you reached the coast I am not just now prepared to say. Frankly, I do not know. As soon as you wandered inland, you were guided and directed to this spot by us, chiefly by myself. Matters have reached such a pass in the outer world, especially in the country from which you come, that it became necessary for us to take cognizance of it. More of that later.

" You are now about one hundred miles from the coast, the western coast of Africa, and considerably south of the equator. We are in the month of January and the days are growing shorter. There are no men of your race on this continent. You will remain with us about a week, and then I will take you back to your own land, to act, I hope, as a messenger of peace between your people and ours."

" A messenger of peace ! " I exclaimed.

" Yes. That also I will explain later."

" But, tell me, how is it that you, belonging to a tribe of African negroes, speak such excellent English? You are certainly an educated man."

At this remark of mine, which he seemed to find very amusing, he smiled broadly.

"We all speak English," he replied. "It is our native tongue, but comparatively few can speak ancient English with fluency and freedom. I am one of them, because my special duties require it, and I have taught it to my son, that he may be prepared to succeed me."

"Ancient English!" I exclaimed. "Why you are talking with me in my own language. Old English is something very different, and I know nothing about it."

Again he smiled. "What year do you suppose we are living in?" he said, with a curious quizzical expression.

"Nineteen hundred and ten," I promptly replied.

"You are far, very far, out of the way. You are a survival of the twentieth century, but are now conversing with a man of the fifty-first century. To be exact, this year is the year 5027 A. D."

It is difficult to describe the effect this announcement had upon me. It was delivered in such a solemn and matter-of-fact manner, that I was fairly nonplused how to take it.

My first thought was that I had to deal with an insane man, but his manner was so calm and collected, and his entire look of physical and mental health so marked that I was thrown into a state of the greatest perplexity. Finally, I blurted out:

" Nonsense, it is impossible. It is all a dream."

" It is not a dream," said he.

" It must be a dream," I replied. " The idea of my living 3,000 years is preposterous. I have had many curious dreams in my life, but this is surely the strangest of all."

" This is no dream. You are living in a different world. Much has happened in the last 3,000 years since you left your own land for this."

" I should say so, and of all that has happened, this is the most absurd. I have often had a dream within a dream, and have thought to myself that I was dreaming, but this goes the limit."

" Did you sleep well last night? "

" Yes, slept like a top."

" Did you ever dream of going to sleep and waking up again? "

" N—no, I cannot say that I have."

" Of course not, it is psychologically impossible. Therefore you are not dreaming. You are living in a real world, as you will learn before long."

" But it is not possible," I exclaimed, with some heat. " It is not possible. I am not a year older than I was when my senses unaccountably left me, and that was in the year 1910. Let us have done with this ridiculous palaver, and please let me know how I can get home. This is certainly the most extraordinary experience man ever had. I shall

have a story to tell when I return."

"So you will, and a true one. Before you leave us you will know that it is a true one. We shall not keep you long, and you will understand how this experience, which seems to you to transcend all that is possible, has come about. It will all be explained to your satisfaction. Meanwhile you have only to submit yourself to the inevitable and allow me for a few days to be your friend and counselor, and I hope that the interchange of ideas may be of mutual advantage, although we never must expect too much from the representatives of the inferior races."

"Inferior races," I indignantly responded; "what do you mean by that?"

"Calm yourself, my friend; your surprise is natural, but the evolution of mankind has continued during the past thirty centuries, and the time of the negro came many hundreds of years ago. At the present time your race, the white race, stands at the bottom of the scale."

"An inferior race! The whites at the bottom of the scale! Do you mean to say that you negroes are more civilized than white men, and especially than Europeans and Americans?"

"There are no longer any white men in Europe," said my host, "but I had better begin at the beginning and give you some idea of what has

occurred in the world since your time."

"Since my time," said I. "My time is now, right now and here. Do you mean to tell me that you are a more civilized person than I am, that you belong to a superior race, and all that fol-de-rol —"

"Yes, I mean that. Moreover, as I shall have no difficulty at all in demonstrating to you before you leave us, your race is so far inferior that, as you will soon realize, your mental powers are probably not sufficient to enable you to understand all that I shall tell you and show you, although I shall try, as a matter of course, to accommodate myself, so far as I can, to your capacity. If anything is obscure, do not hesitate to interrupt me with questions. I am above all anxious to have you understand the relations between your race and mine, for just at this moment they are rather strained, and although we hope for the best, we are fearful of the consequences,— not for ourselves, you understand, but for you. You have, as a race, neither the ability nor the means to harm us, but we are a peaceable folk, deprecating all violent measures, and resorting to them only when they alone are available."

Now I began to be convinced that the negro was insane, and I quietly felt for my revolver, to see if it were handy and if it were loaded. He

observed my action, and remarked dryly:

"Have no fear of me. Your weapon is useless, in any event, as I will show you before the day is out. Are you a good shot with the revolver?"

"Pretty fair," I replied.

"Very well, I will let you test it soon. But we must get on. This talk is profitless. I must give you an inkling of what has been happening in the world. I cannot enter into small details of general history, for I have made no special study of that subject, but we have good historians, notably our librarian, and he will doubtless help you to hunt up anything you may wish to know about the past, when we visit him in the library — that large white building yonder," and he pointed to the edifice I had noticed particularly on the previous evening when I caught my first glimpse of the valley.

"But I know the history of my own people, our great men, our early struggles, our world-changing discoveries, and our gradual development until we arrived at our present dominant position."

Here he ceased speaking for a moment, rose to a standing position, and extended his arm toward the group of ball-players I had noticed as we came along. They evidently saw him rise, and presently one of them, who proved to be his son, separated himself from the others and stood apart.

The negro made signs with his hands and arms, which were answered by the boy, and shortly he ran back to the house, and the negro seated himself again on the ground in silence.

CHAPTER V

A REMARKABLE STORY

THE boy soon reappeared running out from behind the house, and started toward us, bringing something that looked like a table top in his hand. It did not take him long, with his nimble trot, to reach us, and he handed over his burden to his father, and hurried away to his games.

He had brought along what appeared to be a flat, thin board, dark brown in color, and circular in form, about two feet in diameter, and possibly a thirty-second of an inch thick. The negro laid it upon the grass beside him, and proceeded with his talk, merely remarking off-hand that he should need it by and by to illustrate some point or other which I might otherwise find difficulty in accepting upon his bare statement, for, as he said with a smile, " You belong to an incredulous race. That is one thing that has retarded your advancement. The white people know what they think they have proved, we prove what we know. You put the proof before conviction. We start with conviction and end with proof. And this reversal of

your methods has always seemed to you to be nonsense, and always will, and that has made you slow and stupid. It has been your undoing in the past, and always will be in the future, by the natural organic limitations of your minds. However, that is merely by the way, I must get on."

Here I could not help interrupting: "Do you mean to say that the real way to acquire knowledge is to believe first and then search for proof? That seems very absurd to me."

"Just as I said. You cannot understand. We have not time for argument as to that. Indeed I do not know that argument with you or one of your race would be worth while, but before we pass on to other and more important subjects, I will give you an illustration of the fact that you find yourselves compelled by the very nature of things, to adopt as the foundation of all your science, so-called, the same principle that we do. You rest all your knowledge upon the conviction that there is an external world, and yet your philosophers and wise men all agree that there is no way of proving it, that you never have proved it, and never can. In that case you start with belief, and search afterwards for proof, which you have not yet found. But now let us go on.

"You will have understood by this time that we consider the whites to belong to an inferior race.

There can be no doubt about it whatever, although they still retain toward other races that supercilious air which seems to be a part of their nature. This is one of the characteristic qualities of the race which has always operated to prevent its advancement beyond a certain point. When they have reached a certain height of civilization and progress they do not stop and mark time, as it were, until they can get their breath for a further advance, but their civilized society falls to pieces, and they relapse into what is almost barbarism, so that when a new start is made on an impulse or stimulus which always comes from outside, they have to develop slowly again to about the same degree of civilization, they attained before, or perhaps a little higher. Their history consists of a perpetual series of rises and falls, a monotonous succession of periods of civilization and savagery. The essential defect of the white race, which brings about these deplorable relapses, when so much of what they had gained is lost, is the very quality upon which they have always taken great pride, namely, the instinct for domination. They have always insisted that their civilization was the only true civilization, their methods the only true methods, their science the only true science, their religions the only true religions (although they were never able to agree on any one) and that it

was their privilege and their duty to impose their fashions of every sort upon the other races of the globe. They were destined by their physical, mental and moral superiority to be the masters and teachers of the rest of the world, and so they set about it. In every era of the world's history, this domineering instinct has been the cause of their downfall. There has been one such lapse into barbarism since the twentieth century, and they are now again upon the rising tide and have reached just about the stage of their kind of civilization which they had attained early in the twentieth century. When I take you back to your own people, you will not see so very much difference in living conditions, aside from certain changes in the physical configuration of the land, and the fact that you will find yourself thrown among personal strangers, whose language you may at first find it a little difficult to understand.

" In contrast with your people, the other races of the world have not had these ups and downs. They have lacked or suppressed this colonizing tendency, and have advanced step by step, retaining after each advance all or nearly all that had been gained, and although they have sometimes halted for hundreds of years, they have never retrogressed in any marked degree, but when aroused by a new stimulus, they have taken up their

onward march from a point already gained by previous generations. This steady, though gradual, progress of the races other than white, going on beside the frequent and regular relapses of the whites, due as I have said to their absolute inability to progress beyond a certain point without going backward, has had already its inevitable result, viz.: the white race has been left far behind. They were like precocious children, and for hundreds of years were dominant in the world, but they were gradually passed by the yellow races, and finally by the black ones. The white race, though as full of conceit as ever, now stands at the bottom, and the negroes have come to their own, as the leading race. If you are not tired of listening, I will now proceed to explain to you how this has come about, and give you some idea of what has happened in the world within the past three thousand years. Or shall we leave it until another time?"

"No, no, go on," I exclaimed. "I find it extremely interesting, although, of course, I cannot subscribe to your opinion of the race to which I belong."

"You must know then that the negro race remained in much the situation with which you were familiar well into the twenty-first century, but in the year 2067 was born our first great man, that

is to say, the first man of the negro race who could rank with the greatest men in the history of the world, one of the very few who stand in the first rank and are looked upon as really great geniuses. He was born on a small farm in the 'black belt' (so called at the time) in the State of Georgia, one of the United States of America, and his name, after the grandiloquent style of our race which was then in its childhood, was George Washington Napoleon Bonaparte Andrews. When he became a man, however, he abandoned the superfluous names by which he had been christened, and called himself George Andrews, and by that name his memory has been handed down to us."

"Excuse me for interrupting you for one moment," I said, "but I notice that you used the term 'christened,' and that your dates seem to be based upon the Christian era. Is Christianity your religion?"

"Yes," he said, "we are Christians. We have retained the religion and the language of that portion of the white race among whom we spent the years of our tutelage. We all aim to lead true Christian lives, and I am confident that you will recognize the fact that we apply the teaching of Jesus in our daily lives as your race was never able to do. The whites never had more than a thin veneer of Christianity. They were always

too bloodthirsty and bellicose, too domineering and selfish and I may add, always will be, for they are racially incapable of seeing the folly of it. The language we have also retained, considerably modified, it is true, so that you will find you cannot understand it, but our scholars all speak and understand ancient English. I, who am not a scholar, also understand old English, because it is necessary for my work in life. I am an 'outlooker' as we call it. My duties are to keep watch on the frontier, and to make occasional excursions into foreign countries and ascertain their sentiments and plans toward ourselves, so that we may be able to anticipate and protect ourselves against any hostile move on their part, for now and then, at long intervals, their zeal for proselyting, or eagerness to extend their commerce, or some other deviltry inherent in the race, leads them to assault our frontier. They always fail in their expeditions, and always must fail. They are too ignorant and feeble to carry out their designs, but, notwithstanding the great losses they suffer, and the sanguinary lessons we are compelled to give them, the deterrent effect of a failure seems to wear away after a few hundred years and they make another effort. Unfortunately, as we have knowledge, they are just on the eve of another expedition of conquest, to force us to trade with them, but, of course, it will be frus-

trated with the greatest ease, though probably with terrible loss of men and money to the whites. For us, as you may see, it is a bagatelle, annoying, but not serious. Their preparations, I understand, are already well under way, and I shall be compelled in a day or two to visit your country, or at least what was your country, in order to learn just what we shall have to meet, and when the movement of their army and navy begins. If you wish I will take you with me. In fact, I think it will be better for you to accompany me than to remain here, and if you wish to stay among your people, I will return alone."

"I shall be glad to accompany you and solve this mystery in which I seem to be more and more deeply involved. How can you expect me to believe all you have been telling me, or to acquiesce in your estimate of me and my countrymen?"

"I do not expect it at the present moment, but you will believe me before you leave this spot. But we lose time by these digressions, and I must get on more rapidly with my brief historical review and give you a practical demonstration of our advanced civilization. In the year 2067, then, George Andrews was born, and lived and worked with his father, a small farmer, until he was of age, when he went out into the world to shift for himself. He was an industrious, sober, ingenious

and capable man and soon found employment in a large manufactory of electrical appliances conducted by a negro corporation. Here he worked for many years, gradually rising to the position of foreman and Assistant Manager. During this time he had been noticed as a reticent, solitary man, who spent his leisure time at home, mostly in a workroom he had fitted up for himself, into which no one else was ever allowed to enter. In 2097, when he was thirty years of age he surprised everyone in the factory and all his friends and acquaintances by insisting on throwing up his position, and leaving the town, which was practically a town of negroes, and where he was looked upon as one of the leading men. He disappeared, and it was not known what had become of him for nearly two years, when an intimate friend received a letter from him dated at Washington, the capital of the nation, and giving some account of his doings since dropping out of sight. He had withdrawn into the depths of an extensive piece of woodland, where he built a hut, laid in a stock of provisions and a few tools, and worked alone trying to perfect an invention based upon an accidental discovery of his, made in the course of his regular work at the factory. This discovery was of such a revolutionary nature and so tremendous in its possible development that he did not dare

to breathe a word about it to anyone until he had tested it fully, for fear that he should be looked upon as insane, and possibly confined for life. His estimate of the discovery proved to be correct, his invention for its utilization had been satisfactorily completed, and he was now in Washington to bring the results of his labor to the notice of the Federal Government. He was expecting to offer the invention to the government, with no other recompense than the fame that he knew would attach to his name and the moderate pecuniary reward that he was confident would be voted by Congress as an evidence of the gratitude of the nation for so great a boon.

" Judge of his surprise when every official, from the highest to the lowest in the government service, not only absolutely refused to consider the matter at all, but ejected him, sometimes with violence, from the public buildings, and finally issued orders that this " crazy nigger Andrews " should not be allowed to pass the outside door. Knowing what he did and what he had discovered, these rebuffs almost made him crazy in reality, and it was many days before his mind recovered its balance. Then and there he resolved to cast his lot, for the rest of his life, with his own race, and abjure the white race forever. So he left Washington and never returned, but the very night he departed he sent

letters to the President and members of the Cabinet, as well as to the most prominent department heads and members of Congress, whom he had tried to interest in his schemes, and every letter was the same, containing on a single sheet these words and nothing more: 'Woe to the Whites!'

"It may be imagined that some excitement followed the receipt of these letters, for they were believed to presage a negro insurrection. They were easily traced to Andrews, but he had disappeared and no white man ever saw him again or ever had any suspicion of his whereabouts, excepting that now and then a vague rumor would float about among them that he was still living, and busily engaged in some sort of missionary work among his own people. Nothing happened to disturb their serenity, and in a year or two he and his vagaries were practically forgotten."

CHAPTER VI

PERPETUAL MOTION

"YOU are doubtless wondering what this great discovery could have been, which one man considered to be epoch-making, and others, in fact the majority, looked upon as the maunderings of a lunatic or a fool. You will understand the mental attitude of both, when I tell you what it was. The discovery, which, as I have said, was an accident, was '*A means of insulation against the magnet.*' More or less complete electrical insulation had been attained for many years, but the magnetic force had never been insulated. This possibility of insulating the magnet immediately suggested to Andrews the construction of a rotary engine, with the rapid insulation and release of the magnetic force as the motive power, thus doing away at one stroke with the necessity of using heat or combustion in any form. It was to invent this engine that he withdrew himself for a time from the society of his fellow men, and in the solitude of that forest he accomplished his object. At the time of his attempt to interest

the authorities at Washington in his projects, therefore, he had a practicable, powerful engine, suitable for any kind of mechanical work, which would run indefinitely, without waste and without consumption of any form of energy excepting that of the magnet. In other words he had practically solved the old problem of *perpetual motion.*

" It is difficult to understand how highly trained scientific men could have rejected with contempt and without examination the claims of anyone that he had discovered a method of magnetic insulation, for a demonstration would have taken but a moment and it had never been proved to be impossible. So the natural inference is, although from the remoteness of the event we are ignorant of the facts, that Andrews, filled with enthusiasm over his engine, and absorbed in contemplation of its vast possibilities, presented himself as the inventor of ' perpetual motion,' which had long been known to be a delusion and an impossibility, so that scientific men had for many years treated all claims of the sort with derisive contempt. However that may have been, the facts were as I have stated. Andrews washed his hands of the white race forever, and would have nothing to do with them thereafter.

" He now began to devote himself entirely to the interests of his own people. The negroes in

the United States had already taken a considerable part in the industrial development of the country, and there were many large manufacturers and industrial corporations among them, engaged in active competition with the whites, although as their rivalry began to be felt in commercial circles, every conceivable method had been adopted by the whites, who were in the majority, to hamper them in their work and restrict their activities. It was among a dissatisfied and rebellious people, therefore, that Andrews began his work. He went about among them, explaining the treatment he had received at Washington, and urging them to cling together as a race, devoted to each other and leagued against the whites. He showed them how they could obtain a clear superiority, by the use of his engines, from which they could obtain power practically without cost, and gradually introduced them in all the factories where negroes only constituted the managing and working force. It was a work of years, for it had to be done secretly, but by the time he had attained his fiftieth year, he had the entire negro population of the country in a powerful and exclusive league against the whites, and he had done the work so shrewdly and cautiously that the fact was never suspected by the rival race.

"Andrews had every negro pledged to secrecy,

had his engines installed in all negro establishments, and had them everywhere placed in secret locations, inaccessible excepting to the engineers and managers, so that when white men alarmed by the increasing and relentless competition of negro manufacturers, obtained access to the plants they were never able to discover the source of the power that was used. Every factory had its chimney, as of old, and dummy furnaces in which fuel was occasionally burned, so as to emit a little smoke and disarm suspicion. And so matters went on for some years.

" I cannot enter into further details for lack of time, but at length the competition became so severe and the undercutting of prices by the negro manufacturers so destructive to the industries of the whites, that the latter were reduced to adopt extreme measures in defense, and after various things had been tried in vain, like discriminating taxation, and other unconstitutional methods, it was finally determined that a negro state should be created, and all the negro population of the United States segregated there and left, as it was contemptuously said at the time, ' to stew in their own juice.' This was finally accomplished, exchanges of property were made, immense financial complications adjusted, white men moved out, negroes moved in, and the United States was composed of

a large body of States entirely occupied by whites, and one enormous State, or nation with nearly 20,000,000 of inhabitants, wholly composed of negroes. As you may readily imagine, this wholesale transfer of population and of business interests was not carried through without great friction and many bloody conflicts, but it was completed, and both peoples settled down to work out their own destiny. During this process, which transformed the whole face of the country, the negroes succeeded, under the leadership of Andrews, who was now nearly seventy years old, in maintaining their secret compact, and when the whites eagerly took possession of the dismantled negro factories and searched them from top to bottom for an explanation of their industrial superiority, they found not a trace of Andrews' mysterious engines. They had all either been removed to the new abode or had been so utterly destroyed, that any attempt at reconstruction must have been futile. And so the whites learned nothing and for the first time in their progress as world-beaters, found themselves baffled and disconcerted by the despised negro.

"Soon after this separation of the races Andrews died, at the ripe age of 81, bequeathing to posterity the inestimable boon of his great invention and the abiding sense that the unbroken soli-

darity of the negro race must be inviolably maintained if they hoped to retain for themselves and their successors the advanced position they had already attained.

" He was our first man of commanding genius, both as an inventor and an organizer and executive, and we all look back to him as our Moses, who delivered his race from bondage. Other men there had been, in the mists of antiquity, who had done their part in preparing their countrymen to take advantage of the great opportunity that came to them through Andrews, men who had already aided in the industrial development of the race, but their merits were so overshadowed by the genius of Andrews that the accounts of their lives seem almost mythical. One such man I remember was named Bookerty, an odd enough one for a negro. He was one of the first."

" You mean Washington — Booker T. Washington," I said with some heat. " Why, he is living now. I have seen him myself."

" No, my friend, you are mistaken. He lived, if he lived at all, long before Andrews. You never saw either of them, and never will, for they have both been dead for about 3,000 years."

I subsided. It was of no use to argue with this curious, cool, apparently level-headed negro, and so I gave it up and he went on.

"After the formation of our negro State matters continued to go from bad to worse. Causes of friction were numerous enough to keep us constantly in hot water. Many years elapsed before we discovered and gradually eliminated one of these causes, one of the most potent ones, namely: the infusion of white blood with which we were cursed. During the centuries when we lived in close association with the whites there had been more or less amalgamation of the races, and when the great separation took place there were many persons with white blood in their veins who cast in their lot with us — were forced, in fact, to do so, many of them much against their will. It dawned upon us very gradually that most of the criminality among our people was contributed by these negroes of mixed blood, and finally it was fairly proved by the researches of a distinguished physician, one King, Dr. Samuel King, that criminal tendencies in our population were not only confined almost entirely to those of mixed blood, but by tracing the ancestry of hundreds of them with the most minute particularity he demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that the blood of the white and not of the black was to blame. As soon as we were satisfied of this, vigorous measures were adopted to rid ourselves of this contaminating influence and by discouraging marriages among them, and, it

must be confessed, by even harsher methods, the aim of our legislators was accomplished after a term of years and we became a homogeneous nation, of pure negro blood, with not a trace of the hated white anywhere in the nation.

"But by this time we began to realize that we should have to fight for existence. The whites, by constant aggressions, indicated very plainly that segregation was not sufficient, but that they were bent on extermination. Only one thing seemed to work for a time in our favor, and that was the desire of the whites to obtain possession of the secret of which they knew we were masters, before they did away with us. They did not wish it to die with us, and so long as we were still in a position to utilize it against them, we had an advantage that they found it difficult to contend against. But there came a time when their passions could no longer be controlled, and a slight pretext sufficed to raise the cry of 'Down with the blacks.' A terrible civil war ensued, and the consequences were the most momentous in the history of the world. Before I proceed to give you a brief account of it, I must relate a little about the changes that had taken place in the government of the whites."

Here he paused for a moment. During most of the previous harangue, although it became so

fixed in my memory that I am sure I have written down the substance of it correctly, my attention had been more or less distracted by the scenes that unfolded themselves before my eyes. I have already described in few words the general character of the landscape, as seen from the spot where we were located, but now, for an hour or more, in the freshness of the early morning and recovered from the fatigue of the previous day, I was able to observe it more in detail. The houses, low and squat, of one story, were scattered here and there, in no apparent order, as far as the vision could reach. There was no appearance of crowding, and there were no walls or fences separating the plots from each other. Neither did there appear to be any roads, though here and there an indistinct line in the grassy lawns showed that some lines of communication from house to house were more frequently used than others. Many of the houses were colored, not gayly but soberly, showing reddish, bluish or yellowish tints among the mass, which were generally cream-colored or white. The effect of the contrasts of color was never glaring, but agreeable in the extreme. In the distance were a few large buildings, with extensive open places in front, which I afterward learned were public buildings, a large library, a meeting hall, a camera (of which

more will be said) and an amusement hall, or theater. Near each house, at the side or rear, was a garden, in which the variety of form and color showed that vegetables and fruits as well as flowers were cultivated. The people in sight from where we were seemed all to be busy, though I was unable as a rule to discover what they were doing. There were many women and girls, and a few boys, at work in the gardens. Half a dozen men were working on a new house not far away, which seemed to be about half completed. A few men were at work in the open air, near their houses, artisans it seemed, carpenters or wood-workers of some kind, and I was not too far away to detect two or three metal workers, for I could see the red hot sheets and rods on which they were engaged, although I could see no flame or smoke from the forges where they were heated. There were several groups of boys and girls running about and shouting, playing games of some sort apparently, vigorous, healthy and full of animal spirits. Here and there scattered amongst the buildings I could see what looked like large arm chairs, or perhaps I should say bath-chairs, for they had hoods that partly concealed them, and they were fitted with a kind of wheel at the back, the use of which I could not conceive. The whole impression made upon me was one of peace and

plenty. Suddenly I saw a man issue from a house, go out of my sight behind one of the chairs, start the wheel going, for I could see it whirl, and to my astonishment the thing rose almost straight up in the air and sped away to the north. I was so dumbfounded, that I gasped for breath. My host, who had been watching me in silence for several minutes, quietly remarked:

"An air-car, our only means of communication and travel. I will explain it presently, when I have finished this historical sketch, which is a necessary preliminary to the revelations I have promised you."

With a sigh I resigned myself to what I expected would be another interminable sermon on the virtues of the blacks, but he fixed my attention from the start by giving me some unexpected information about my own country and people.

CHAPTER VII

THE GREAT CIVIL WAR

"ANDREWS died in 2148, and the antagonism of the races culminated about a hundred years later in a war that lasted more than two years before it ended in the total defeat and humiliation of the whites. I have given you a short account of the development of the negro for the previous two hundred years, and now we come to the whites. The great republic of the West had endured more than a hundred years before the seeds of its dissolution were planted. This happened in your own time, when the United States became possessed of colonies, and ruled millions of men as subjects and not citizens. There were a few wise men, even at that time, who heeded the teaching of history that the downfall of a republic always began when it acquired colonies and ruled over subjects who were allowed no share in the general government, but were looked upon as aliens who are not citizens and treated as such. No republic can have subjects who are not citizens

and endure. And so the change in the great white republic set in, to the dismay and sorrow of the champions of freedom throughout the world.

"But I must pass over the intervening years with the briefest possible sketch. Ever since the great civil war there had been a perceptible trend to a greater centralization of power in the Federal or central government and an increasing tendency toward encroachment upon the powers of the separate States. There were occasional political convulsions in which this baleful tendency appeared to meet with a check, but its course was never reversed and its onward sweep was on the whole a steady one. It acquired some degree of authority from the written constitution of the nation, in which the framers, in their anxiety to provide for every contingency that could arise had inserted two provisions, which colored the whole future of the republic and as gradually interpreted and amplified by the courts, were finally quoted in justification of all the centralizing legislation carried through by those who called themselves the National Party, the successor of the former Republican Party, with some additions from the party of the people, who still called themselves Democrats. These two provisions were the following, as nearly as I am able to quote them, for this is pretty ancient history and I am not much of a

scholar in such matters.

"The first was that Congress was empowered to pass laws 'for the general welfare,' and the second was that the rights not specially granted to the general government nor forbidden to the States, were reserved to the States respectively, 'or to the people.' These two Constitutional provisions, it was held by the Nationalists, virtually did away with state lines and all necessity for state governments and committed the entire body of legislation to Congress and the people as a whole, voting under what they called a referendum. The triumph of these principles ended in a practical wiping out of the States, although their distinctive names were retained, and occasional elections were held at which Governors were chosen, whose functions were nil, and who held a mere honorary position, somewhat like those of the Consuls after Rome had become an Empire."

"One moment, please," I said, "I am sorry to interrupt you, but you are getting on so fast that I should like to learn more details of my country's transformation before you go on."

"What I can tell you, I will, but as I have already said, I am no scholar."

"Tell me," was my eager reply, "what ever became of the woman suffrage movement and the Panama Canal, both of which were just develop-

ing when this unfortunate aberration of mine began."

"Aberration?" he said, with a fatherly smile, "you will find you are suffering from no aberration. But about your questions. I cannot answer them. I do not know enough. Those things belong to the minutiæ of history and are only for scholars. When we have finished what we have on hand, I will take you down to the public library, and you can ask the man in charge, who is a very learned man, and if he is not able to tell you what you want to know, will undoubtedly be able to refer you to volumes in his charge that will answer everything. But let us now return to our subject.

"The United States had become practically an empire, although they still called themselves a republic. But the President often served for life, and although the office had not become hereditary, it was a common thing for him to name his successor, in accordance with a precedent established, I believe, in your own time, by a President named Teddy. So far as governmental functions were concerned, the independence of the States had been abolished, and all legislation emanated from Washington, for the capital of the nation had never been moved. Moreover the executive had gradually absorbed more and more of the powers of

the legislature. The President suggested laws and ordinances to Congress, which simply registered his decrees and so made them binding upon the courts. The great republic had slowly lapsed into very much the condition of the Romans in the second century, and although the people were fully conscious of the loss of their liberties, they were satisfied with the material prosperity that enveloped the nation in a downy covering of luxury and ease. There were no more wars. The nations were all at peace, and the whites all over the world had nothing to divert them from their overmastering pursuit of wealth, which they looked upon as the most desirable thing in the world.

"They had long ceased to have any intercourse with the blacks. The negro State had been ostracised from the first, and before many years had elapsed after its foundation, by a most illegal and unconstitutional line of procedure, duly upheld by subservient courts, they had deprived the negroes of their seats in Congress and cast them out from any share in the government. They formed an isolated nation surrounded by hostile communities, but among themselves they preserved the forms of free government in which they had been trained, and formed in 2200 the only genuine republic remaining upon the surface of the earth. With the whites democracy had reached its zenith, and the

swing was again running strongly toward absolutism.

"Meanwhile we had developed rapidly. Under free institutions, ambitious, determined, entirely rid of any admixture of white blood, with immense industrial advancement, thanks to the legacy of George Andrews, we had so increased in wealth as to excite the cupidity of our neighbors, who finally determined to expel or exterminate us and appropriate our rich lands to their own use. Some of our wise men had foreseen such a development, had watched the signs beyond the border for many years, and knowing that they boded an eventual fight for existence, had, all unknown to our enemies, elaborated and perfected a military system on entirely novel lines, which they hoped would be sufficient to protect our nation from any aggression on the part of our neighbors. Looking back upon the swift course of events during those fateful two years, it seems doubtful if our precautions and preparations would have sufficed, if they had not been toward the end planned and directed by our great military leader, Josiah Brown.

"The trouble began in the latter part of the year 2248 when a 'bleached' negro, a white with the slightest tinge of negro blood in his veins, was discovered in one of our manufacturing towns.

We had lived for many years in the belief that all white blood had been eradicated, and this man's presence was an astonishing thing. It is not known to this day how he managed to evade notice, for although he had penetrated only to a border town, no one had witnessed his approach. He was unknown to any of our people, and although we were constantly on the watch for spies, he must have contrived, by blacking his face and watching his opportunity, to evade everybody's notice up to the moment of discovery, when he was evidently preparing to depart. Of course he was detained. No one knew what information he might have gathered in relation to our industrial methods which we had always guarded so carefully. He was one of our enemies, and we could not permit him to return. Some were in favor of killing him, as the only way of insuring perpetual silence on his part, but better counsels prevailed and he was imprisoned far away from his people in the center of our State. Early in 2249, about three months later, a demand came from Washington for his release. It was refused, and immediately followed by a second demand for his release with a large money indemnity and an apology. Our foes were at last unmasked. Their demands were scornfully rejected, and our entire people, as one man, prepared for the worst. We

knew we had nothing to hope for in case we were overrun by the whites. Former experiences had taught us that victory would be followed by wholesale massacres, probably accompanied by fiendish tortures and eventual extermination. Better die in battle than at the stake was the uppermost thought in every mind, and we began to gird ourselves for war, it must be confessed, with sinking hearts.

"The whites had gathered their forces for the campaign, and we had planted our army in advantageous positions on our borders, when a new spirit ran through the nation like an electric thrill. Brown and his lieutenants had for years been quietly working on a new gun for the artillery, which would hurl missiles with tremendous energy by means of centrifugal force. Andrews' invention gave us our force, unlimited in amount, and it had been utilized in these new field pieces in such an ingenious and effective way, that we were provided with artillery not only immensely superior to that of our opponents, but artillery that required no explosive for its operation, and no ammunition but the missiles themselves.

The disparity of forces was very great. Our people numbered some 20,000,000, while our antagonists were able to recruit their army from a population of nearly or quite 200,000,000, besides

auxiliary forces they might draw from the colonies or outlying possessions. Moreover, the feeling of race antipathy had spread to some extent over the remainder of the Western Hemisphere, and there was some apprehension on our part that other nations might join our foes in their work of extermination. Our only hope seemed to lie in striking at once with a force so powerful, so well organized and so advantageously maneuvered as to strike terror into the minds of our opponents and deter others from coming to their aid. This plan was followed out, and Brown, only waiting until the army of the whites was within striking distance, swooped down upon them with all the forces he could muster. Our infantry hardly fired a shot. The work was done by the artillery. The range and efficiency of our new gun was so far superior to any they were able to bring against us, that their case was really hopeless from the start.

"As they advanced toward the frontier they were met by a perfect hail of bullets and cannon balls, which filled the air and mowed the soldiers down in swathes. The swarms of flying machines which darkened the air in their front and which, they anticipated, would work havoc with our army, were torn to pieces as they flew, and the explosives that were to be dropped upon our armies and towns fell upon their own men and only served to increase

the dreadful slaughter.

"It is not necessary to go into the horrible details of what followed. Their advance was checked, and soon turned into a rout. Brown and his army pursued them hotly. Army after army was raised, for the whites never lacked courage, but as defeat after defeat reduced their numbers and their resources, although their dogged determination prolonged the conflict unnecessarily, they finally sued for peace. It was a terrible humiliation for the proud and arrogant race, but there was no other way to avert practical annihilation, and they had to come to it in the end. The terms we granted were unprecedented in the history of the world. We asked for no surrender of territory and no indemnity. We had come out of the contest almost unscathed, but filled with indignation at the treatment we had received, and inflexibly determined to break off forever all relations with the race that had treated us for hundreds of years with the utmost injustice and contempt. We demanded that they should assume the expense and provide the means for the transportation of the entire population of the negro state, 20,000,000 of them, to the interior of Africa, where we had already prepared the soil for our reception by propaganda extending through a long series of years among the native inhabitants.

"To their credit, be it said, the terms of the agreement were religiously carried out. They employed a fleet of about 1,000 vessels in the work, and in less than two years the great transmigration had been completed. As had been the case with our former migration, 200 years before, everything that could possibly give the whites any clue to the real foundation of our prosperity and power was destroyed before we left the country, and all the machinery and appliances we took with us on the transports had been so completely dismantled that no mechanical genius among the whites could divine the uses or the relations of the multitude of parts. Most of our accumulations of property were left behind, only enough being carried with us to our new home to tide us over for the few months that were necessary to get fairly started again. And so we came back to the land of our ancestors, and here we have remained ever since."

"But how about these extraordinary and hair-raising things that you were to demonstrate to me?" I said, still incredulous and still unable to divest myself of the tone and manner of a superior.

"Do not worry, my friend; that will come in due time, and the time will be very short now, for our life in Africa has been for thousands of years so uneventful that I shall have little more to tell."

CHAPTER VIII

THE NEW PHYSICS

"AS soon as we were settled in our new home, we organized a government, a republic, like that we were accustomed to in the country we had abandoned, and for many years affairs ran on smoothly enough. Gradually it became noised about that we had another great genius in our State, a worthy successor to George Andrews, who had given us our first great lift in the world. But the new discovery, although it was dependent upon that of Andrews and a legitimate development from it, was still more astonishing — in fact, it was the most surprising discovery that was ever made, and it is highly improbable that anything so wonderful and important will ever be discovered in the future. The inventor, or discoverer, whichever you choose to call him, was a son of our great military leader, Josiah Brown, and had been named after our pioneer genius, whom Brown admired profoundly, George Andrews Brown. As a boy he had been so erratic in his views, and so willing to expound them whenever he could find a listener,

and moreover had been such an interminable talker, that his companions had made an acrostic from his initials, and used to call him 'Gab' Brown. As he grew to manhood his disposition altered to some extent and he became more reticent and meditative, but the nickname always stuck to him. He had conceived the idea of his invention before we left the United States, and had it perfected in a short time after our arrival here.

"And now I will tell you what it was, and because you will undoubtedly disbelieve what I say, I am prepared to demonstrate its truth upon the spot.

"He discovered that, by a slight modification of the alloy invented by Andrews, and the utilization of some simple, though novel, mechanical means, he could not only produce magnetic insulation, but could suspend, or cut off, or insulate, the *attraction of gravitation.*"

I stared at the speaker with mouth agape.

"But that is impossible. Why, why, everything would fly to pieces. Nonsense, nonsense. The thing can't be. Oh, no, no. I have heard enough."

And I began to wonder how it could be that so cool, sensible, level-headed a man as my host appeared to be, could also be a lunatic.

"If what I have just told you seems to you so

incredible, I do not know what you will think of what I have to show you. But I will now proceed to justify the statements I have already made."

So speaking, he put his hand in the bosom of his robe and withdrew a large horseshoe magnet with its armature, which he handed to me with the request that I would test its attractive power, which I did. The magnet was a strong one and I could feel the pull on the armature when there was a distance of a quarter of an inch between them. Then he produced from an inside pocket a thin sheet made of some material I did not recognize, but which had somewhat the appearance of celluloid. It was made up, however, of two sheets cunningly joined side by side, the dividing line running down the middle and the two parts being about equal in size and dimensions.

They were of the same color, but one was polished and smooth, while the other was dull and while not rough, looked unfinished.

"These two sheets joined in the middle, as you see, are of the same thickness, but one of them is composed of our insulating medium, while the other, although of nearly the same composition, has not been subjected to the final treatment and has no insulating power. Now try them," and he held the sheet horizontally before me, the polished surface being the nearest. I applied the magnet

to the upper surface of the sheet and held up the armature on the under side. It was immediately drawn out of my hand, as I had expected, and clapped firmly against the under surface of the plate and held there. Under instructions, I held the magnet in position while my host slipped the sheet along between magnet and armature. As soon as the dividing line was reached, and the dull material passed beneath the magnet, the armature fell to the ground. My surprise, of course, was great. I picked it up, and taking the sheet in my own hand, tested it over and over again, but the result was invariable. When the sheet of dull stuff was interposed the attractive force of the magnet was instantly annulled. There was no doubt about it, and it required very little imagination on my part to appreciate the mechanical possibilities that lay in this simple but astounding invention.

"You are satisfied of the truth of my first assertion?" he inquired, and I readily assented. "It was not so much of a strain on your credulity as my next demonstration will be, because, although your people have never made the discovery, it is not so altogether out of line with what they have found out before as to be absolutely incredible to you, especially when you see it with your own eyes. But now, I warn you, your belief in the

possible is to be taxed to the utmost, and I hope you will endure the shock to your preconceived notions without losing your equipoise."

"You need not worry about me," I said, "nothing you can show me will disturb my equipoise."

"Very well, then," and he took up, for the first time since it had been brought over by the boy, the table-top, as I have called it. I then noticed, for the first time, that all around the edge were small round knobs, like the handles of small drawers, and such in fact they proved to be, for he withdrew, one after another, around about one-half the board, thin sheets that looked very much like the dull material with which we had been making our tests of the magnet. These sheets having been removed and laid beside him on the grass he put the board down flat upon the ground, and picked up a few small stones in the vicinity, which he handed to me. I was standing at the time about four or five feet from the board and as he gave me the pebbles he asked me to throw them one by one on the board. I did so and was considerably surprised to notice that one or two of them (perhaps I threw half a dozen at this first trial) that one or two of them, I say, appeared to swerve a little to one side and they all landed on that half of the board from which he had removed the slides. He smiled at my expression of surprise and handed

the pebbles to me again. In order to determine the accuracy of my previous observation, I threw the six or so pebbles, this time, with deliberate intention so that they should fall on the half nearest to me, which was the part from which the slides had not been removed. My suspicion was correct. Not one of them fell where I had intended it to fall. They all swerved in the air and struck the farther side. Now considering that the board was only four or five feet away, and I threw with deliberation and care, this outcome of my effort puzzled me a good deal. Seeing this, my host turned the board around, so that the empty half was toward me, and I had no trouble in landing all the stones on this half of the board. He then asked me to throw them on the other half, as I did before, the part farthest away. I threw them, as before, and one after another, in spite of my increasing care in making the throws, every one landed on the nearest part of the board. Not only that, but one of them, at least, when fairly at the middle line, seemed as if it bounded back, so sudden was its inexplicable change of direction.

" I am showing you these things gradually," he remarked with his placid smile, " so that you may get accustomed to them without too much of a wrench to your ancient ideas of what is regular and proper in Nature."

At this point he inserted again all the slides which were lying beside the board, thus making both sides similar again.

"Now," he said, "the insulation is complete. Try your pebbles again."

I took them up and tossed one toward the board. It went as any well conducted missile would go until in its descending curve it came to a point vertically above the edge of the board, where it changed its course for a horizontal one and dropped on the ground on the other side, at the feet of the negro. One after another flew over the board in the same way, and my astonishment was so great that I drew in my breath with a loud "Whew," that seemed to please the negro immensely, although his dignity, real or assumed, would not allow him more than a smile of unusually broad proportions.

"You are doing well," he said; "let us go a little further. Hold a pebble over the middle of the board and drop it."

I picked one of them up and holding it over the center of the board felt a curious sense of lightness in my arm and a seeming lack of control, for the arm rose a little in the air without my volition and it required a decided readjustment of its muscular action to bring it down again to a level. I saw the negro smile as he noticed the action,

and then I dropped the stone. Instead of falling, it shot out horizontally toward the black man until it reached the edge of the board when it fell to the earth at his feet. To say that I was surprised hardly expresses my feelings, but I had seen jugglers do many wonderful things, and I was still disposed to charge these curious happenings to some sort of trickery. The only comment he made was to murmur,

"The pebble, being cut off from terrestrial gravitation was attracted toward me as the nearest and largest material object, until it came again within the sphere of the earth's attraction."

I said nothing, but pondered a little, and waited to see what might be the next performance on the programme. Meanwhile I seated myself under a tree, where I could watch the proceedings at my ease. Presently he began to take the board or table-top apart. He removed all the slides, and then from the interior he brought out other contents, which I had not seen before, and for which there hardly seemed to be room inside. But there they were and he pulled out a lot of things, reminding me still more of a conjurer, who brings out a whole dry goods store and a menagerie from the hat he has borrowed from a spectator. First there were several lengths of wire, as it seemed to me, although they were so extremely flexible that

they swung from his fingers like strings. But they had a metallic luster and I took them to be wire that had undergone some peculiar method of annealing. Then out came several short rods, and these were stiff and pointed at both ends, apparently made of metal but brownish red in color, reminding me of the curious bomb-proofs or whatever they were, that I had seen when approaching this singular community.

He chose a spot underneath an overhanging branch, and after some rather careful changes and readjustments of their position and angles toward each other and the ground, he stuck the small rods into the earth, inclining toward each other and near enough to cross, like the letter X, and so constructed a little fence, about three feet long and perhaps four inches high under and parallel with the branch which stretched almost horizontally overhead. He then hung several of the wires or strings from the tree, immediately over this fence at intervals of six inches or so, letting each one down so as to touch the fence below. I felt impelled to ask him what they were, wires or strings, but he answered, rather shortly I thought, "Neither."

I was not to be shaken off, however, before I had satisfied my curiosity, and so I said:

"They look, and those little rods also look, as

if they might be made of the same material as the spherical prominences I saw just beyond the hills."

"There is some similarity," he replied.

"What were those things? Telephones?"

"We use them sometimes for that purpose. We can communicate speech through them."

"Is there any other use for them?" I persisted.

"Oh, yes. They have very important uses."

"What, for instance?"

"I will show you one," he said, "when we visit the public buildings you see down there."

"But I wish to find out all I can during the short time I remain here," I said, with some heat and impatience. "What is the main or most important use of those structures?"

"Pray God you may never have cause to know," he said, with an air of solemnity, and not another word would he speak about them, but went silently on with his work.

When he had completed his arrangement and the various rearrangements of the rods and strings he came away and seated himself by my side. I began to feel that he was very much in earnest, and to suspect that trickery or legerdemain perhaps might not account for all that I had seen. I myself knew several tricks, very puzzling to the uninitiated, which depended upon invisible threads and small plugs of wax for their successful per-

formance, but sharp as I might look I could detect nothing of the kind in these actions of my host, who appeared to be perfectly honest and serious in everything he showed me.

We sat side by side without speaking for perhaps ten minutes, myself watching keenly, and now and then gazing over the landscape, at men and women busily occupied in their daily tasks, at the children, running to and fro or chasing balls in their games, and he profoundly meditative, with his eyes fixed upon his little mechanical appliances. I was, I confess, a little piqued by the curt way in which he had disposed of my questions, but when I came to consider what he had already told me about the profound and deadly secret in the possession of his people, with their jealousy of the white man and their determination that he should never know it, I realized that he was probably right, and that I had been trying to obtain information that he was in every way bound not to disclose. I understood now that my inquiries must be circumscribed within certain bounds — that beyond these I could never go.

CHAPTER IX

AN ASTOUNDING EXPERIMENT

PRESENTLY he rose and went over to the place where he had stuck his rods and hung his strings, and began to remove all the strings excepting the end ones; but first he laid one along the bough, connecting at each end with the strings hanging from the ends. Now he began the operation of removal very cautiously. It seemed to me that he fumbled a great deal in unfastening them from the bough, either from awkwardness or some excessive and, as it seemed to me, unnecessary caution, and I stepped forward to assist him. They were very insecurely attached to the bough, hardly more than barely hooked over it, and I put out a hand to twitch one of them away. Instantly he swung back his arm and struck me a staggering blow in the chest, which almost threw me off my feet. As it was I was knocked backward three or four feet, for he was a much larger and more powerful man than I and the rudeness of the assault astonished me, contrasting so strongly with the kind and considerate be-

havior of the man up to that time. At the moment I thought again I had to deal with a lunatic, but he immediately turned and grasped my arm to support me, while he caught his breath with a gasp.

"Pardon me," he said at length when he had recovered himself, "I was foolish. I should have warned you. I am sorry for what has occurred, but it was the only way. If you had touched one of those strings, as you intended to do, you would have died on the instant," and while I gazed upon him with a look of incredulous horror, he added: "I have here tapped a reservoir of energy immeasurably greater than any you have ever known. Do not attempt, while you are with us, to meddle with anything with which you are not already perfectly familiar. You are in a new environment, of which you know nothing."

Now I was sure that I had to deal with a crazy man, one of the cool-blooded kind who appear perfectly sane excepting on one single point, a monomaniac, or as it is now fashionable to call them, a paranoiac. I began to fear that he might develop a homicidal tendency, and I speculated wildly on my extraordinary situation, and on what chance I had of escaping from these black men with a whole skin.

The negro, who, after this momentary flush of

excitement had passed, seemed to have recovered his equanimity, now spoke again, before I had time to formulate any plan of dealing with him.

" This is the last demonstration I shall give you before we go down and meet some of the other members of the community."

" Very well," I said, " I should like to see your whole bunch of tricks. They are good ones so far as you have gone."

" You are still suspicious," he said, with that inscrutable smile of his, " but will be less so after this test of your incredulity." He paused a moment, walked over and took a last squint at his toy-like arrangement, and then, turning to me asked if my pistol were loaded.

I took it from my pocket and examined it. It was an automatic, and loaded with smokeless powder cartridges. The magazine was full. I felt comparatively secure against any immediate attack, and if he sprang upon me with evident intention to do me physical harm, I would have shot him on the spot, without regard to consequences.

" Yes," I replied, " it is loaded."

He went back a few steps and stationed himself a few feet behind his strings and sticks perhaps ten feet away from me.

" Now," he says, " I want you to fire at me with that pistol, if you think you can throw your

bullets within the limits I have arranged between the tree and the earth. But do not fire outside of those bounds."

What a request! I am not a dead shot with the revolver, but I could certainly put ten holes through him at that short distance within a minute. I declined to make the trial.

"I won't do it," I exclaimed. "I have seen that trick on the stage, but the circumstances were entirely different. You could not stand a minute under such a rain of bullets, and this is no trick pistol, nor are the bullets fake ones."

"Shoot away. I will run the risk."

"No, no, I absolutely refuse," and I threw the pistol upon the ground.

He stood a moment irresolute, then quietly removed his outer garment, a white flowing robe and suspended it from a branch in the rear of the one from which the strings were hanging and came over where I was standing.

"Well," he said, "I am sorry you have so little confidence in me, but you will at least condescend to exhibit your marksmanship on that robe, will you not?"

"I certainly will," said I, "if you do not object to having it peppered full of holes. It is not much of a test of marksmanship, though. It is a good deal like trying to hit a barn door with

the muzzle of the gun in contact with it. I should rather stand fifty or sixty feet away."

"That would not answer my purpose, nor would it convince you yourself. If you found no marks upon the cloth at that distance you would think you had missed your aim. No matter how much chagrined you might be, that would be your conclusion."

"And you want —"

"I want you to shoot at that robe from a point so near that you will feel absolutely certain of hitting it."

"Very well. And you think I can't hit it?"

"Yes."

"How ridiculous! Why it covers the entire background of that hole in the air you tell me to shoot through, and I am only three or four feet away. I could not help hitting with my eyes shut."

"Shoot."

I raised the weapon and fired.

Not a mark upon the white surface of the target. I fired again. Still no mark. Nor had the white robe stirred as it hung, or showed any sign of having been touched. I was not only surprised but annoyed, and immediately suspected that my suave and dignified host had so far unbent as to do me a mean trick by substituting blank cartridges in the revolver. How he could have done this

was beyond my power to explain, for the pistol had never been out of my possession. Aha! I had it. The substitution had been made while I was asleep, during the past night. Why had I not thought of it before? I had looked the weapon over before I began firing, but as everything looked all right I had not examined the cartridges closely, not deeming it necessary. But now I determined to make sure, and removing the magazine emptied the cartridges and picking them up one by one scrutinized them with great care. A side glance showed me the negro sitting quietly in his place, with that inscrutable smile that so provoked me. The cartridges were all right. There could be no doubt of that. They had the stamp of the manufacturer on the base, and as I tested the bullet with my pocket knife, I found it hard steel. No, the cartridges were genuine. The fault, somehow, lay with myself. And yet it seemed impossible that I could miss a target three feet in diameter and less than a dozen feet away, and with an automatic weapon too, which is supposed to hit the mark whether you aim or not. So, puzzled as I was, I slipped the magazine back into place for another trial. This time I took more careful aim, and, as I have said before, I am not a bad shot with the revolver under any circumstances. I fired again. No result. Not a mark on the tar-

get, not a leaf stirred on any tree or bush, not a blade of grass bent its head, and not a speck of dirt flew to indicate where the bullet struck. I began to be provoked. This beat any trick I had ever seen, but I objected to having it played upon me. I fired the remaining shots, looked around, saw the grin widening on the face of the black, and fairly carried away with a feeling of exasperated rage, I hurled the pistol at the target.

"I will hit it anyhow," I cried, and as I spoke I stood with mouth agape, fixed to the spot and almost horror-stricken, for as the weapon reached the imaginary curtain between me and the target, it vanished, leaving not a trace. Vanished into thin air! The thing was impossible. And yet there it was. It had happened right before my eyes. How could it be? I looked around at my friend. He smiled again and quietly remarked, as he rose from his sitting position:

"It is gone. You will never see it again. You have lost it, and it can never be recovered."

"But how is that?" I replied. "I suppose the trick is done. I must admit that you surpass the best I ever saw. But now that the exhibition is complete, I expect my revolver and ammunition to be returned to me."

"That is impossible, my friend. There is no trick involved in this demonstration, as I have

told you from the first. I have been showing you some of the inventions and discoveries made by our race, which have given us our position at the head of mankind. I had hoped to convince you before this."

"But where are these things that have disappeared?" I asked with some impatience. Meanwhile he was carefully dismantling his apparatus of strings and sticks, and stowing them away where they came from.

"I do not know, nor does anyone. Our scientists tell us that objects disappearing under such circumstances are possibly resolved into the original element. They say that we have opened a door into another world, and that these vanishing material things go through that door into another phase of existence. It is only a crack and no foot or eye has ever been able to pass through it and return. Nobody can tell what is on the other side. Our learned men, among the physicists, have been working for a thousand years, ever since this phenomenon was discovered, to arrive at some explanation of it, but all in vain. You can form an idea, now, from what you have already seen, why we are so confident of our power, and why we fear no attack from anyone on the face of the earth, especially from any white man."

By this time he had gathered up his apparatus

and suggested that we should go down again into the settlement.

" I fear," he remarked as we set out, " that our time is short. It is now almost noon. Do you wish to take luncheon? For myself I eat but twice a day, but you can eat now if you choose."

I had taken a very hearty breakfast and said that I would wait until later in the day before eating again.

" Then we will go to some of our public buildings, for there are still some things I ought to show you before you return to your own people."

CHAPTER X

ANARCHY

WE directed our steps toward a low round structure, something like half a mile away, which he spoke of as the Camera, and I seized the opportunity as we walked leisurely along, to gain additional information about this strange country and still stranger people. I had already been forced to abandon all my preconceived ideas about the negro. While he was gathering his things together I had been busily revolving in my mind what I had seen and heard since my arrival. I could no longer conceal from myself the unwelcome truth that I was in the company of a superior being. My pride of race was broken down. I felt myself to be an inferior, and unpalatable as this conclusion was I had to swallow it. With my mind once at rest on this point, however, and a frank acceptance of our relative position, I began to feel more like a pupil, and privileged to question him without my previous sense of humiliation. I determined to find out all I could in the limited time I apparently had at my command.

"What is your form of government?" I asked. "Republican, I suppose, as you came from the United States."

"We have no government," he replied; "that was done away with long ago."

"No government! What do you do with your criminals? How do you keep order? How do you protect yourselves from aggression?"

"In order to give you a proper idea of the conditions in which we live, I think I had better take up and continue our history from the time we settled here in Africa and made ourselves independent. When we first settled down, we organized a government much upon the plan of the one we had before we left the old country, and that had been based, as you say, upon that of the United States, and although our former masters had ended with an empire, we had preserved the republican form of government in our own State. So we set up a similar one here. But when we had become firmly established, and everything was going on swimmingly, as it seemed to most of us, a class of thinking men was gradually developed, who began to question and criticise the constitution of society and the justice of our form of government.

"Somehow, partly perhaps in consequence of this criticism, but mainly, I think, because the form of government was not suited to our race, our so-

ciety began to deteriorate. Some persons thought we were relapsing into barbarism. We had brought over with us not only the forms of government, but the commercial and social methods of the whites, and after a hundred years or so our people found themselves truly in a parlous state. We exploited the resources of the land in every way. We destroyed forests for lumber, mined for metals and coal, went mad after money, became luxurious and lazy, neglected our civic duties and seemed to many to be racing rapidly to destruction. Crime was frequent, our prisons were crammed, our courts were full of litigants, in spite of the fact that the delays of the law were most disheartening, and when decisions were finally handed down they were often most unsatisfactory and inconclusive. Something had to be done, and after much discussion by our legislators and in popular assemblies, it was determined that the first thing to be corrected should be the clogging of the wheels of justice and the interminable proceedings in the courts. A beginning was made by an attempt to regulate the methods by which suits were conducted by the attorneys who had them in charge. It was found that a great deal of time was wasted both in the preparation of cases and their presentation in court by the time honored practice of turning aside from the case immediately

in hand and looking back through the records of past trials for judicial decisions in similar cases years before. It was asserted by the lawyers that it was necessary to look up these decisions and apply them to the case in hand because any law passed by a law-making body was uncertain of application until the exact meaning and intent of every sentence had been decided in open court. In other words a law was good for nothing until it had been buttressed and backed up by the opinion of some judge or judges. This meant practically that our laws were made by the judges and not by the legislators as representatives of the people. Moreover, it was ascertained that, in looking up these previous decisions, called precedents, the attorneys always selected and brought out to the attention of the court only the cases that favored their own side of the suit, so that the most industrious or keen-witted lawyer would often win his case, without any regard whatever to the justice of his contentions. It was also held by the critics of this practice, to the great disgust and contempt of the legal fraternity, who seemed to consider as one man that the public or laity were not qualified to judge in the matter, it was held, I say, that it was unfair and led inevitably to injustice to allow any consideration of precedents whatever to have weight in any suit, that no case was like any other

and never could be, because human affairs were in such a condition of incessant flux and change, that every case ought, of right, to be decided on its own merits and without reference to any other, and that the judge who actually heard the case could apply the law and interpret the law, in that concrete case then and there before him, better than a judge who had rendered a decision and given his interpretation of the law in a somewhat similar case, years before, since the cases, no matter how great their outward similarity could never be identical, on account of the constantly changing relations and environment of the parties to the suits. It was as foolish, said the critics, as to maintain that any two trees in a forest are precisely alike, or any two men or women. It was asserted, moreover, that lawyers themselves practically acknowledged the uselessness of constantly appealing to precedents, for a court often reversed a previous decision, or differed from it, or modified it, and it had even been known that a court reversed its own decisions in accordance with subsequent enlightenment or more mature consideration. So it was finally determined to begin our reforms by abolishing all reference to precedent, neglecting all previous decisions, and confining the attention of the attorneys and the court strictly to the case in hand, thus compelling them to decide

every case upon its own merits, without reference to any other.

"The effect of this change in legal procedure was somewhat startling. It certainly facilitated the despatch of business before the courts, but it went so far in diminishing the opportunities for chicanery, and put such a heavy handicap upon learning and industry in the legal profession that the qualities of the successful advocate were mainly logical ability and shrewdness, including in the latter a knowledge of human nature. But the qualities that won cases before a bench or a jury were those that could be exhibited openly in court and could not be hidden from observation. There could be no more delving in musty records for what would support one's contentions, and ignoring or concealing everything antagonistic. This made our trials shorter and much more satisfactory and the public was convinced that better justice was done. It also curiously enough, resulted in a considerable diminution of civil suits and consequently of the number of lawyers, which some persons thought a gain of itself. But criminal cases were not much diminished, and our entire court system continued to be an expensive burden to carry.

"Events now began to move swiftly. The people had made one breach in the old time honored

conventions, and the results had been good. They began to devise others. They found their courts very costly in salaries, fees and wages, and began to wonder whether justice could not be obtained more cheaply. What is the use, they said, of laws, anyway? Why not let each case, which is now litigated at enormous expense, be decided by neighbors? Why should two people who disagree have to hire special advocates and go through all the tedious court proceedings in order to settle their quarrel? If so many cases are sent to a referee, anyhow, why not let them choose their own referee, and leave the whole thing to him? And so it was, to make a long story short, that after prolonged discussion, it was resolved to abolish all the courts and get rid of the judges and court hangers-on."

"But what of the criminal courts?" I said. "How about them?"

"That gave us some trouble, and we solved it by abolishing all law, at one fell swoop. We found that almost all of what we called crimes were connected with, or caused by two things, property and passion, and a considerable part of crimes due to passion we found to be really prompted by the desire for property. As you can see, we were rapidly approaching what you would call anarchy, and in fact this is where we ended. When we thought we had settled beyond a doubt

that all crime was the result and a natural and inevitable result of the institution of private property with the slight exceptions of sporadic cases of physical violence caused by ungovernable passion, by general agreement we did away with the whole thing, entirely abandoned the idea that one man or one set of men have any right, except that of might, to direct the actions of any other man and tell him what he may do and what he must not do. We determined that every one of us should lead the life he himself thought best, and that no other man or woman should attempt to coerce his actions, except in their own self-defense."

"Sheer anarchy, as you say."

"Exactly. It was a long time before things ran smoothly, but we have been living in this way now for more than two thousand years, and have nothing to regret. Indeed, our wise men tell us that our abolition of all such unnatural restrictions and attainment of absolute freedom was the only thing that saved our people from relapsing into the barbarism that has been the fate of the white race so often through the ages."

"But how could you possibly make such a complete change in so short a time?"

"The time was not so short. It was many years in coming and our preparations were perfected very gradually. And when the change

finally took place there was for a considerable time much tumult and disorder."

"It seems to me like a reversion to savagery."

"Do we strike you as savages? Do you not see the evidences of a high civilization all about you here?"

"And yet," I replied, "mankind has always emerged from a primitive savage condition by adopting or developing some kind of government by law. The security of person and property depends upon proper enforcement of laws well devised and properly enacted."

"That is the ancient theory, and it seemed at one period of history to be well founded. But it is not strictly true. While law has been an important element in the development of human civilization, it was really suited to only one stage in the evolution of the race. Under its régime the human race advanced, it is true, and probably in consequence of the invention of the law. But the law was only a step, and when its operation ceased to be advantageous, when it became a clog upon further advancement, it was discarded. For, after all, what is the law, but a means of imposing the will of one man upon others, or of a community upon its members, usually a majority upon a minority? It always infringed upon the independence of the person, very much as the war club

of a savage chief maintained his sway. The law, after all, is based upon force, and is null and of no effect unless there is physical compulsion back of it. The progress of mankind has been marked all along by a gradual emancipation from the rule of physical force. From the brutal dominion of the savage chief or head-man down through the patriarchal head of the family, the absolute monarch, the king, the parliaments, the legislature under universal suffrage in a simon pure democracy, there has been a constant, undeviating tendency toward the emancipation of man from external control. The entire emancipation, the absolute freedom of the individual has been dreamed of by many, but attained by us alone, and that is one reason out of many why I say that we represent at the present age of the world the highest type of civilization. Even in your own time there were those who struggled blindly toward this goal, but they were few and far apart, and out of sympathy with their surroundings, so that they accomplished nothing. In fact, it is extremely doubtful whether the white race will ever give up the dreadful delusion that the more law they have the better off they are. Law is their panacea for all social ills, but actually, though they cannot see it, it is only a soothing syrup, a narcotic for undeveloped minds."

"Well, we will let that pass, but I am curious to

know how the transition was effected from a régime of law to its abolition."

"It was determined upon many years ahead, how many I do not now recollect, but my impression is that no particular date for the change was named, but it was simply understood that people were tired of their chains and ready to throw them off as soon as they could. It was, of course, anticipated that when all laws, courts, police, and all restrictions and penalties affecting personal liberty were abolished, there would be great turmoil and distress until things settled down. Old beliefs and habits would for a time still sway the actions of a large number of people. Old ideas of money and property would hold for a while, and the poorest of the community, it was to be expected, would join in a general looting of persons and premises. And it was so. But when they found that they could do nothing with their plunder, that there was no buying or selling, and that they were simply accumulating a lot of stuff that they could not use, that they had all they wanted to eat and drink, besides clothing and shelter, without stealing or injuring anyone else, the disturbances gradually ceased. It was soon found that there was absolute equality of privilege, that there were no more rich or poor, and that happiness and contentment lay in looking after oneself and leaving others to do

the same.

" Our preparation for the transition period consisted largely in teaching the ignorant what was to come. The government constructed some large warehouses at convenient points, where supplies of all the necessaries of life could be stored, where any person was at liberty to go and help himself to anything he wanted. It was urged with all possible vehemence that on the fateful day everyone should continue for a time, until matters adjusted themselves, to do whatever he had been doing, and to live as he had been living, only bearing all the time in mind the fact that everything was done for the benefit of all at first, until individualism could be made complete. There was to be no money, no medium of exchange, and no private property, which, by the way, always leads to the eventual bankruptcy of nations. The factory employé was to work, the artisan to ply his trade, the professional man to give his service, all without fee. Everyone who lacked food or clothing was to procure it in the shop, and the shopkeeper was to supply it without compensation."

" In other words there was wholesale confiscation of private property."

" Rather a wholesale and universal contribution of private property, for the change in personal relations had been thoroughly discussed and what

was done was done with the consent of all."

"Do you mean to say that all who owned property of any kind gave it over to the general use voluntarily? That is not conceivable."

"Nevertheless, that is precisely what occurred. But as a matter of fact no one had to sacrifice anything. The richest men, those who had to give up the most, according to your ideas, still had good food, clothing and shelter, and that was all a man needs and all they had before. Whatever they possessed over and above this was superfluity, a pure accumulation of things they could not use and kept merely because they did not know what to do with them. What can the tradesman do with the contents of his shop? He cannot eat all the groceries nor wear all the clothing. It is of no use at all to him unless he can exchange for something else, money it used to be. But if there is no money, no medium of exchange, and he can procure all he wants of other things by stepping into his neighbor's shop, the best he can do with his own stock is to distribute it among those who do want it, is it not?"

"But the luxuries of the wealthy?"

"Not only useless, but injurious."

"Do you mean to say that your people, all of a sudden, became contented to live on plain food, wear coarse clothing and sleep on bare boards, just

because some cranky individuals thought it better?"

"You willfully misunderstand, I am afraid. No one suffered from privation. On the contrary, those who had been at the bottom and were all the time housed in kennels and half starved, found themselves, of a sudden, provided with warmth and shelter, good clothing and good food. There has always been enough of the necessities of life in the world to make everyone comfortable, but they had a way of drifting into the possession of individuals, who refused to give them up excepting on their own conditions. You can see, as you look about you here, that we are all comfortably housed, well fed, decently clothed and contented. What more ought man to want?"

"Some people enjoy luxuries," I remarked rather feebly.

"They can have them," said my host. "I will show you our warehouses soon, and you will acknowledge, I am sure, that every want can be supplied from them."

"Where do all these things come from, that fill your warehouses? You have no commerce, and with no government and no money in circulation, no one is obliged to work for a living. Who makes the things?"

"That is one of the fallacies of the old order,

the idea that no one will work unless he is compelled to by an overseer or master, or to satisfy his hunger or procure himself shelter. There never was a greater mistake. Work is not a curse, but a blessing. The idle man is in misery. Few men are good company for themselves. They always seek distraction, and the desire to occupy mind and body is so irresistible that some of our cleverest men and women occupy their time mainly in devising employment for others. Men have different tastes and choose the form of labor that suits their natural aptitudes. There is variety enough to produce all we want or need. At least after two thousand years and more, we still find it so."

"But you surely have found that men naturally shun the disagreeable occupations, when there is no inducement like that of enhanced remuneration to entice them."

"You beg the question. There are no disagreeable occupations with us. No man would select an occupation that was disagreeable to him. But, many men, many minds. What is disagreeable to one man is not so to another. Personally, I detest grubbing in the garden, but my wife is enamored of it, and would hate to sit in the Camera, as I do, and watch, or make long journeys to foreign parts to spy out the land."

"But such things as scavengers, for instance," I said, with some hesitation.

"That never troubles us. We fertilize our own ground, and any disagreeable excess is easily disposed of by the route taken by your revolver," and he smiled benignantly.

"But what do you do with your criminals?" I asked again, not well satisfied with the previous answer to the question.

"We have none. How can there be a criminal, when there is no man-made law to break? There is no temptation to rob or murder or cheat, for everyone can procure anything he wants from the public stores."

"But you must have quarrels and your people must kill each other sometimes."

"That is really the only crime, as you would call it, that we have amongst us. Once in a while a man will kill another, but such cases occur seldom, for even in your society, murders are generally caused by money. Those we have are due to sexual jealousy, and are very rare because we marry early. Even among you, I believe, such murders were generally condoned. Was there not something called 'the unwritten law' in vogue in your time?"

"Yes," I replied; "it is true that murders for that cause were often unpunished."

"Punishment would not prevent them anyway, and we look upon those rare killings as purely personal matters, and not as affecting the community."

"You mention early marriages as tending to prevent such crimes."

"Yes. Our children mate early, and we consider it better so. They have no problem of subsistence before them, and we accept the principle that in this very important matter Nature is the best guide. We believe that the time of life when the sexes are drawn toward each other by the strongest ties, when each idealizes the other, and they feel they cannot live apart, is the best time for them to come together in a life compact. This is usually between sixteen and twenty-five, and few wait as late as that. They are young and their natures are plastic, so that they easily and naturally accommodate themselves to each other's idiosyncrasies, and their lives readily merge into one current, which flows steadily and evenly for the remainder of their lives."

"But the offspring of such young parents is apt to be weakly or worthless, is it not?"

"By no means. We find that when the natural impulse to mate is most imperious, the best results follow. Why, one of your great men of antiquity, Napoleon, was the son of a mother of eighteen and a father of twenty-three."

"Well, how about the children? Where are your schools, or do you think that education would be too much like discipline, like coercion?" said I, with a lame attempt to be sarcastic.

"Absolute individual freedom is for those who can use it, without abusing it — that is, for adults. Up to a certain age, children are savages. You know that. They have to be treated as such and trained at first by the compulsion of physical force, gradually diminishing and differing in the method of application as they grow older. Practically every child has to pass again through the same discipline that the race did, and by virtually the same stages."

"And your schools?"

"We have none. Our children are educated at home. Of course we recognize the fact that some men and women are naturally fitted by inclination and ability to be teachers of the young, and such are usually willing to aid in the instruction of their neighbors. In this way a single man or woman may have five or six children besides her own to whom she imparts instruction during a part of the day, but it is the rule that parents teach their own children."

"Suppose a young couple wish to mate. How do they find a home?"

"If none is vacant, they live with parents or

friends, wherever there may be room for them, until a house is ready. They add nothing to the work of a household but rather assist, and of course there is no expense. But there is usually some house they can take. Houses are going up all the time. The masons and carpenters must keep busy, or they die of ennui. There is a house in process of erection that we have just passed."

"Yes, I noticed it. By the way, I saw last night that there were no doors or windows in your house. How do you keep warm on cool nights, and how do you insure privacy?"

"We have arrangements for closing the doors and windows, when necessary. Just at this season we are more comfortable without them. As to privacy we use screens mostly. No one follows another behind a screen without permission to do so."

"And heating? You must find artificial heat necessary at certain times in the year."

"Yes. Our heating apparatus is beneath the house, the walls of which are hollow, so that the air, which has been warmed by radiation, keeps the walls and floors comfortable in any weather. The heat is produced by the electric current, and is, of course, produced with little waste."

"And you raise most of your household supplies on your own premises?"

"Oh, no, not at all. We all have our gardens and raise a good deal of food in that way. Some have poultry, for we use many eggs. Our milk which is a staple food with us, especially for the children, is goat's milk. We raise no cattle, for we prefer the milk of the goat, and cattle are dirty in their habits, and more difficult to care for, and the coarse red meat is distasteful even to those who are meat eaters. Sheep are bred for wool and mutton, and our grains are wheat and corn."

"But if you are so prosperous as you appear to be, and never troubled by poverty or lack of food and shelter, I should suppose your population would increase so rapidly that by this time, several thousand years you say, the country would be overcrowded."

"It might seem so, but such is not the case. Our families are not large. Nature, somehow, attends to that. When there is a great waste of life, as there is among you, from war and disease, the gaps so to speak are rapidly filled, but when there is no waste, the increase is slow. Now and then, to be sure, we find ourselves forced to occupy new territory, but we try to encroach as little as may be upon land already occupied, and spread ourselves in the wilderness. We can soon make any land productive, and when there is no attempt to play the dog in the manger and accumulate un-

necessary holdings, the requirements of a community are not large. Half an acre of land is ample for a family of five, and that accommodates six thousand to the square mile, or 60,000,000 in a territory 100 miles square."

"More, I suppose, in the cities?" I inquired.

"We have no cities. At the time we abandoned the old form of civilization, we found ourselves burdened with all the vices and inconveniences of that civilization. But when living became easy under the new conditions, people began to remove from the crowded places into the open country and the cities gradually became depopulated and were finally torn up by the roots, so to speak, and utterly eradicated. Most of the material used in their construction could be utilized elsewhere, and what could not, was destroyed, and the city sites turned into cultivable land."

"But about your population. Do you make any attempt towards scientific breeding, the scientific mating of the young people?"

Here he came nearer laughing outright than I had ever seen him, but controlled himself, as he answered:

"No, indeed. Nature is the best mingler of bloods. Under our conditions of life, we find that the indefinable instincts which draw two together in indissoluble bonds are almost unerring. No

intermeddling of ours could improve on the work of Nature."

While he was speaking it flashed upon my mind that the whole idea was a foolish one. What scientific commission or bureau of eugenics, for example, I thought, who wished to produce a man of profound philosophic intellect, whose teachings were to revolutionize the thought of the civilized world and be felt for thousands of years after his death, would ever have chosen for his progenitors an obscure marble cutter and a common midwife, and who, in planning for the birth of an astounding genius in war and statecraft, who should juggle with thrones and rock Europe to her foundations, would ever have chosen as mates, a small country lawyer and his peasant wife in an isolated corner of the world?

CHAPTER XI

THE CAMERA

WE had been walking for a time in silence, when it occurred to me to ask something more about the occupations of this extraordinary people, and so I said, rather abruptly:

"But how about your occupations? Are there tradesmen among you, doctors, clergymen, artisans, laborers, and all the variety that is found with us?"

"Yes and no. Of course, as we have no such thing as property interests and no medium of exchange, we have no lawyers and no tradesmen, or merchants. There are a few physicians, but they are mostly surgeons, as there is almost no disease among us, but of course there always will be accidents, though even they are few. If a new need arises, there is always someone found who can supply it, but our wants are limited as compared with yours."

"And there are no lazy ones among you, whom the others have to work to support?"

"Now and then one, but such a person is looked

upon as abnormal and is simply tolerated. It is natural for men to work. How otherwise are they to occupy their time? All animals suffer from ennui if they have nothing to do. Most of them have to work all the time to get food enough, and even those who find their sustenance everywhere under their feet, like the grazing animals, have to take considerable time in shifting from one grazing ground to another, and when they have not that to do, occupy their small minds in chewing the cud. Even the laziest of your domestic animals, the house cat, is either busy hunting for scraps of food to eat, or for mice, or attending to her toilet, and if these all fail her, she goes to sleep. There can be no such thing for any living animal as an agreeable lack of anything to do. The advantage we have over you, in this respect, is that none of us is tied down to any particular hours, or is obliged to work when he is weary and needs rest, or is under the dictation of an employer. There are no employers or employés. We do things for one another, but it is always a matter of friendly good will. When anyone makes anything that is not in immediate demand he takes it to a central warehouse and leaves it there for others to look over. And one result of our voluntary labor you must already have noticed in my house, and that is the genuine and finished quality of all our work."

"Yes," I replied, "I noticed particularly the exquisite joining of the stones in the wall of my room, and the fine workmanship of the bath."

"Exactly. Our men and women have plenty of time, and everything they do is done as well as they can possibly do it. There is no incentive, as there is with you, for cheating or scamping in their work. Each man takes a pride in doing his best, and a large part of our enjoyment in life rests upon that fact, that we can manipulate refractory material as it comes raw from Nature, and alter it into such exquisite forms as we are capable of. There is nothing more satisfactory in life than the finishing any piece of work so finely as to arouse the admiration of all who see it."

By this time we had arrived at the entrance of the building he had already spoken about as the Camera. It was low and round, perhaps fifty feet in diameter and ten or twelve in height, though the roof rose in the form of a flattened cone, several feet higher. We passed through the door, which closed behind us, and I found myself in a large circular apartment, lighted through the roof, and with the inner surface of the wall sloping to the floor, towards the center of the room. While the upper diameter of the room was perhaps forty-five feet, the bottom, at the floor, appeared to me to be not more than thirty, or possibly

twenty-five. In the center was a large round table, and three or four chairs completed the furniture of the place. The surface of the wall was stained or painted, or composed of a colored material, the hue of which it is difficult to describe. I should say it was a sort of grayish blue, but it produced a curious effect of haze. It did not look like a solid surface, but like an atmosphere. This seems a little absurd, but it is the only way I can describe it. While I was still puzzling over it, my guide addressed me.

"Pray, seat yourself. I have called this room a camera, because that seemed to be the easiest way to describe its purpose to you. As a fact, however, it is not a camera, for the effects you will see are not produced by optical means, that is, by lenses or mirrors, excepting in a far-fetched sense. This is my workshop, or office, as watcher, or outpost, of the community. There are many other similar ones on our border, for, unfortunately, although we are at peace among ourselves, our neighbors are not always as considerate as they might be, and especially your countrymen, who bother us a good deal now and then. As I told you before, they are preparing an attack upon us, and from all we can learn, it will come in this direction. It is my first experience in such matters, although I am eighty-five years of age."

"Eighty-five," I exclaimed. "You cannot be more than forty."

"Nevertheless, I am eighty-five. We live long. Why should we not? Our weakly stock was weeded out thousands of years ago, when we rid ourselves of the last trace of white blood, and now we are born strong and healthy, and live simply, have no disease among us, and, barring accidents, complete our natural term of life. Here comes one older still," and he turned toward the door, which opened to give entrance to a man somewhat bent at the shoulders, and white as to hair and beard, but still apparently in vigorous health.

He advanced slowly and exchanged greetings with my host, with a passing glance at me. They talked together for some minutes in subdued tones, and then the negro turned to me.

"My friend who has just come in," he said, "is one of our oldest citizens," and turning to him again asked him a question. This was the first of the new or modern English I had been able to catch, and sounded like this:

"Hwarldje?" which I take to be a corruption of "How old are you?"

The answer I did not get, for it was mumbled in a very thick and somewhat tremulous voice, and evidently contained much more than a simple state-

ment of age. I did, however, hear something that sounded like " Unenti-ee."

My host or guide turned to me and said quietly:

" He is one hundred and ninety-three years old. He is failing physically, though not mentally, and will not be with us much longer. But he is wise, experienced and skillful and will have charge of our preparations to receive the onslaught of your countrymen. That is why he is here."

I sat dumbfounded, though I had already witnessed so many wonders that I had ceased to be incredulous. Facts are brutal things, and I could not hold out against the crushing impression of what I had gone through. So I sat in a comfortable seat and looked on to see what the negroes would proceed to do.

My friend went around the room, manipulating something I did not clearly distinguish, but he had the air of moving switches and pressing buttons along the junction of wall and floor. When he had completed the circuit of the apartment he returned to the center of the building, seated himself beside me and bending down turned a knob which projected slightly from the flooring immediately beneath the table. Then he arranged some maps and charts that were lying upon the table and the two began to scrutinize them with great care, and carry on a conversation in low tones.

They might just as well have spoken up or even shouted, for I could not understand a word they said. And yet it sounded like English, the cadence was the same, the inflections of the voice and even the sound of the words, so that it gave me the impression that their peculiar pronunciation was the only thing that prevented me from understanding. Perhaps this was because I thought I caught a frequent "duh," which I took for "the," and also a frequent copula, as I took it, sounding like "nh," which I thought might be our "and." But all speculations of this sort were speedily banished from my mind when I became suddenly aware of a curious and wonderful change that was slowly developing in the walls of the room. Out of the haze which I have described already there began to appear outlines of figures, buildings, hills and other objects belonging to out-of-doors. This magic-lantern change went on rapidly — in fact, the whole thing occurred, after the central knob in the floor had been turned, in much less time than it has taken me to write about it. The entire wall of the room in a few moments became a panorama, evidently a reproduction, or representation of the surrounding country, for in one place I could distinguish the house where I had spent the previous night and the hillside, where I had been shown the wonders of this new country and com-

pelled to realize how limited was my own knowledge, how poor my capacity, and how helpless I and my countrymen must be in any conflict with these negroes and their terrible and mysterious powers of offense and defense. A vast landscape lay open before me. It was as if I were on the summit of a lofty and isolated mountain top. By turning I could look in every direction, and everything was displayed in such perfection of detail and coloring that I was entranced with the view. In one direction I could see the low range of hills over which the boy had guided me the day before and beyond the open plain through which I had been wandering. At the extreme verge was a hazy atmosphere which I was unable to penetrate, but it seemed to be, and I presume was, many miles away. To the right of this section of the view was the sheet of water I had seen on my left while I was walking across the level plain, and I could plainly perceive that it was a large lake, whose further shore was bordered with a thick forest. The view in other directions seemed to be virtually a reproduction of that in our immediate vicinity, with which I was already familiar, hundreds of small houses all standing by themselves and each surrounded by greenery, some large patches free from buildings and of varying shades of green, which I took to be fields of grain or other vege-

table produce growing on a large scale, innumerable little domestic gardens near the houses, people moving about, children playing, and here and there at considerable distances apart, large white structures which I supposed to be public buildings of some sort like the large one close by which I was soon to visit. I could also detect numerous floating objects in the air, which I soon perceived to be some kind of flying machines, although different from any with which I was familiar. I had already seen some of them hurrying about while I was talking with my host on the hillside, but had taken them for aeroplanes of the sort I had known, for I was so busy with other matters that I had not paid any special attention to them. Now, however, I saw that they were decidedly not aëroplanes such as I had known, for wings or side planes were absent, and their general appearance as I viewed them from a distance was that of large armchairs, with a pointed shield in front and a horizontal plane underneath. I could not at the time distinguish propellers or any motor apparatus, but that was probably because I was looking at them from underneath and any mechanical works would be hidden by the extended plane at the base.

While I was occupied in picking out the details of the landscape, the two negroes were busily at work at the table, where they pored over the maps

and drawings, and made marks upon them here and there, frequently looking and pointing at the beautiful wall picture, and talking earnestly all the time, with many nods and gesticulations. Presently they seemed to have arrived at some decision and the old negro, with a touch of the hand, turned and left the building as slowly and silently as he had entered it, paying no more attention to me than if I were a grasshopper. Then my friend turned to me.

"Well, that is settled. In an hour or two I must start for the Americas, and you had better accompany me. Then if you wish to remain among your kindred you can do so. If you would like to return with me, you can also do that. I should prefer to have you come back for a short visit, in order that you may witness the actual operation of our means of defense, for our only object in harboring you for these few days has been to enable you to go back among your countrymen as a missionary to turn them, if you can, from any thought of conquest on this hemisphere. Let them know that they have done with the Old World and the Old World has done with them, and needs them no more."

"The word missionary," I said, "brings another thing to my mind. You have said that you adhere to the Christian religion, but I see no indication

of churches anywhere in this landscape. How is that?"

"We have no church buildings," he said with a smile, "for they are not necessary. Churches among your people are simply clubs with philanthropic annexes. Our worship is mostly private. It seems to us more in accordance with the teaching and the example of our Master. Those of us who are more expansive in their spiritual aspirations, more social, meet in each other's houses, like the first Christians, two or three together, you know. We have no priests, no ministers, no expounders, no intermediary between ourselves and our God."

"But what takes the place among you of all our church activities, our hospitals, our visiting of the sick, and poor, our parish schools, and the like?"

"None of these agencies are needed among us. You forget that we are a healthy people, in body and soul. These agencies you speak of are all symptoms of social disease. There is no poverty amongst us, very little illness, orphan children are rare and easily cared for by neighbors, and widows can always look out for themselves. No, we need no churches. They would soon give rise to sects, to organized associations of dissenters, and that would lead to quarrels and discord, which we have happily been rid of for hundreds of years. Now that our relation to our God is looked upon as a

sacred personal matter, no one tries to impose his finespun theories upon anyone else and there is no such thing as religious discord. All history warns us against allowing it to spring up again. Your race, the white race, by the way, have never, with rare exceptions, been practical Christians. Christianity with the mass of them is and always has been purely theoretical."

"Well," I said, "we will let that go. But tell me how you produce this wonderful effect. This picture, what is it, and how comes it here?"

"It is partly an electrical and partly a magnetic device. You doubtless noticed — in fact, I think you have spoken about them — the small hemispherical elevations near the foot of the range of hills over which you came. It is done through them."

"Oh, yes," said I, "and the small disc-like spots I saw on their surface act like the lens of a camera. I see."

"Well, not exactly that. They have something to do with it, yes, but not in the way you mean. There is nothing of the lens about them. You could not understand if I attempted to explain their working to you. So we shall have to let that pass."

He began making the circuit of the room again, with his switch turning and curious manipulations

and then returning to me stooped and turned the center knob. The landscape began to fade.

" If you return with me from the other side, this is the spot where we shall remain during the coming conflict," he said. " Here we shall watch and wait. But now we must go, and I regret to say that we have not too much time before our departure."

So we emerged from the building. A backward glance showed me that the beautiful wall picture had entirely disappeared, and the room was the same as when we entered it.

" I must show you our library and store house," he said, " and then we will get ready for our journey."

CHAPTER XII

A BIT OF HISTORY

BY this time we were quite near the fine large white building I had seen from the hillside, and I was able to examine it more closely. It was a splendid structure, there could be no doubt about that; simple, but grand. I have no knowledge of architecture, and am unable to describe it properly. I can only tell of the effect it produced upon me. The front, which we were approaching, was lined with fluted columns, doubled in the center, reached by a magnificent broad series of steps, and standing out a little in advance of the remainder of the front. The roof was also a little raised over the central portico. The material seemed to be marble. In front was a large stone paved area or plaza, bounded on the sides by a low wall, and on either side of this open space was a bronze statue. The pose and outline of one of the figures appeared so familiar to me, that I went over to see whether my suspicions were correct. I found they were. It was a statue of Abraham Lincoln. I expressed my surprise at seeing it here, and also

remarked that it looked wonderfully like the St. Gaudens' statue of the same man that I had seen in Chicago.

"You are right," the negro replied. "It is the same."

"But how came it here?" I exclaimed.

"We went over and got possession of it during your relapse into barbarism, about fifteen hundred years ago. It was suffering from neglect, had been knocked off or pulled off from its pedestal, and was lying unnoticed in the dirt, when we learned of its condition and went over there one night and removed it."

"Relapse into barbarism?"

"Yes. You can learn more about that, if you care to, from our librarian, who is a scholar and historian, and moreover, speaks excellent ancient English. You shall meet him presently. This statue and the other on the opposite side are the only statues of white men we have erected."

"And whose is the other one?" I asked.

"Louis Pasteur," he replied, "and we procured that in much the same way. It is also an ancient statue, made by a contemporary sculptor, and used to stand in Paris, the capital of France at that time as you may perhaps remember, but when the great expulsion took place, and the whites had to leave the country, we were able to gain posses-

sion of it and bring it here. As I said, they are the only memorials of white men we have here, and curiously enough they both lived in the same century, the nineteenth, also your century, I believe. We put them here and value them highly, because, in contrast to most of the whites, they were great altruists, or at least in spite of some critics, we look upon them as such." He turned toward the Lincoln statue and continued. "You will of course, understand why we revere this man. He was the emancipator of our race from bondage. The other," pointing across the plaza, "was also a great emancipator, for he freed the human race from its superstitions regarding disease."

"What do you mean by the 'great expulsion'?" I inquired with a great deal of curiosity.

"That must wait until we reach the library," and we crossed the open area and began to ascend the steps. Just as we had mounted two or three, I heard a loud whirring sound that seemed not far away, and there was a sudden slight darkening of the air, as if the shadow of a cloud had passed over us. The next instant I saw what looked like a huge loaded truck or dray, though wheelless, drop to the ground in front of a small basement door in the wing of the building at our left, and a negro stepped jauntily off. Another emerged from the door, and the two began in a leisurely

manner to remove the contents of the truck inside the building. At my exclamation of surprise, my host quietly remarked:

"That is a farmer, bringing in supplies. By the time we reach the storeroom, these things will be inside and very likely stowed away in their appropriate places."

"You use your air machines for heavy trucking, then?"

"Certainly, although, for us, there is no such thing in transportation as heavy goods or light, but only bulky or concentrated. We conduct all our travel and transportation through the air, and consequently have no roads, as you have seen. We have a few beaten paths, but our foot travel is mostly untrammeled and free."

I should have liked to stop and investigate this extraordinary truck. In fact I should have liked to stop all along and scrutinize everything we passed and try to learn something about this remarkable country and people, but my guide kept hurrying me along, and I could not cut loose from him, for I should have been all at sea. I felt in my bones, as I presume a small dog feels, who is intensely interested in everything he sees and wants to investigate constantly, but is held in leash by his master, and dragged inhumanly along, compelled much against his will to leave vast fields of

exploration and inquiry entirely untouched. So he briskly mounted the steps and I trotted meekly on behind him.

We passed through the porch and entered the library. There was no vestibule or entrance hall, and we came directly into the room. It was vast and lofty, lighted from above in such a way that glare was avoided and there were no dark corners. Around the sides were rows upon rows of shelving, mostly empty as it seemed to me, excepting for a few thousand volumes scattered here and there, and a few hundred of what looked to me like small ivory boxes piled up in one corner of the room. The floor was occupied by tables, some large and some small, and a vast number of arm-chairs, many of which were occupied by readers and writers. Here and there upon the tables were small wooden boxes, looking like stereoscopes, which I took them to be, for I saw one of the readers taking small plates from one of the ivory boxes I have mentioned, inserting them into the wooden box, and then inspecting them through a hole in the side.

Many of the occupants of the room looked up as we entered, but only for a moment, as they turned again to the business that had brought them there. They appeared to take but slight interest in me, although I was the only white man in the

place, and felt a little hurt that so little attention was paid me. My guide soothed me a little by explaining that I was by no means the only stroller that had visited the community, that they had had perhaps a half dozen such in his own time, all of whom were taken in charge by himself and sent home again as missionaries among their fellows, as I was to be.

"Your boy told me he had never seen a white man before."

"He told you the truth, but he is young yet."

"What becomes of these visitors you send away?" said I. "I never saw or heard of one."

He smiled again as he replied: "As soon as they begin to talk, we learn, they are clapped into asylums for the insane, and left there for the remainder of their lives."

"But, good heavens, do you suppose they will do that to me?" I said, in some alarm.

"I am afraid they will," he said, "though you will have a better chance than the others to gain a hearing, if you come back here with me, because you will find them smarting under a defeat they cannot explain, and they may be disposed to heed what you have to tell them."

An elderly, small and very active negro was busily engaged at one of the smaller tables, occasionally looking up to converse with a visitor, and

now and then darting to a shelf and procuring a book for an applicant.

" That is our librarian. He spends his entire time here, and knows the location of every volume in our collection. I was going to say that he was acquainted with the contents of them all, but that might be going too far. We had better go right up and ask the questions you have been putting to me, but which I have left unanswered by reason of insufficient knowledge."

The scholar received me with the utmost consideration and begged, in very good English, to be allowed to serve me in any way he could.

" My host and guide in this wonderful place," I said, " tells me that our time is very limited, and I shall not be able, therefore, to ask all the questions I should like to, but one or two items of information I should be very glad to get. He tells me that I am somehow, in a manner that he says I shall understand later, a survival of very ancient times — some 3,000 years ago."

He nodded his head in reply.

" Now, that being so, and I have no way to disprove it excepting to reiterate its impossibility, accepting it for the moment as true, I am naturally anxious to learn something of what has taken place in my world, among my own people and race, in those thirty centuries."

"Naturally," he replied, "but in the time you have at your disposal I cannot, of course, give you a history of events for 3,000 years. There are probably some special points you have in mind, and those I will try to explain, if you will state them clearly."

"Of course I am more interested in what took place immediately after I left the world I was living in, than in anything that has occurred since, with perhaps one exception. In the early years of the twentieth century there were pending two matters I should really like to know the termination of. Perhaps you can tell me how they turned out."

"And pray what are they?"

"The Panama Canal and Woman Suffrage. Was the Canal opened on time, and was it a success, and did the women finally win the right of suffrage, which they struggled for so long, and if so, was the experiment successful? That is, did it turn out to be advantageous and beneficial to the State?"

These questions seemed to be posers. He rubbed his head and pondered a moment, and then with the remark that the suffrage matter was rather an insignificant detail which he should have to look up, added:

"Panama Canal? Ah, yes, the Panama Straits. Yes, I understand. Pardon me one moment,"

and he went to one of the shelves filled with the little ivory boxes, and reaching for one of them, brought it over where we were standing. He gave it to my guide and went off apparently in search of a stereoscopic box which was not in use.

My guide opened the small box, which was about an inch square and an inch thick, and disclosed the interior filled with small, extremely thin plates covered with a dark gray stain extending over the whole surface of each plate, excepting a very narrow margin of white around the edge.

"This," he explained to me, "is a volume of history covering a period of a hundred years or more in great detail. As he has selected it for you, it doubtless includes the twentieth century you have been asking about. Our books were found to accumulate at such a rate that we were fairly swamped with them and so one of our ingenious scientific students invented this plan which preserves everything we wish to preserve and yet occupies little space. Those boxes you see, which fill only a few feet of shelving contain almost everything that has been thought worth printing as far back as our collection ever went. We have the entire literature of the world here, and can supply in a moment anything that is called for. The books you see, which occupy much more shelf room than these small boxes taken altogether, are

only those of the last hundred years. When a book is a hundred years old, it is transferred, by a most ingenious process akin to photography, to these thin plates, which are indestructible, and so thin that each of these boxes holds 20,000 of them. Of course the reproduction in this microscopic form can only be read by powerful lenses, but these other boxes, which formed an essential part of the invention, contain a peculiar arrangement of lenses and mirrors, that enables us to read them without difficulty."

While he was speaking, the librarian had returned with a stereoscopic box and now stood waiting quietly until he should have ceased. Then he inserted the plate my friend had been showing me into the bottom of the box, pushed a button at the side, and turned the box around so that the other side faced me. Then I saw what I had not noticed before, that there was a large opening on that side, and in the opening appeared a smooth, white, semi-translucent surface like a pane of glass, inclined backward from the top at a convenient angle for reading and upon that white surface appeared a page of easily legible print, spotless and perfect as any well-printed book. It was evidently a portion of a history of my country and of about my time, for I saw in it a reference to " Black Friday " and something about " specie payments,"

which I took to be references to financial history of the early 70s.

" This is not what I want," I exclaimed, and the librarian, with a glance at the page before me, removed the little plate and choosing another, placed it in the box and I found what I wanted to know though stated in very brief terms.

According to these records the opening of the Panama Canal, which had been fixed for the beginning of 1915, had to be postponed from time to time on account of unforeseen difficulties which prevented its rapid completion. These were mostly land slides, or earth slides, which kept filling up the excavations and otherwise interfering with the operations of the working force. To a certain extent, to be sure, these slides had been anticipated, but it had been supposed by the engineers that after a time a static equilibrium would be reached, and no more slipping of the sides would occur. But after this equilibrium had become, as was believed, thoroughly established, the slipping most unexpectedly began again, and from the very fact that it was not expected and came on rather suddenly, caused more damage and delay than had previously been the case. So the opening had to be postponed for more than two years, and was finally set for January 1, 1918. In the latter part of December, 1917, most of the fleets

that were to take part in the celebration were in the vicinity, not more than a hundred miles or so away as a rule, and none more than a day's sail. On Christmas Day there was a slight earthquake shock, which was felt in greater or less degree throughout Central America, and it was so strongly felt in Panama, which had been hitherto entirely exempt from such visitations, that it aroused some consternation and fears were expressed of possible damage to the Canal, but all apprehensions were dismissed when it was found upon a careful survey being made that all the works were intact and not the slightest harm could be detected. On the following day, December 26, there were other shocks, and along toward night one more severe than any that had preceded terrified some of the inhabitants of Colon and Panama to such an extent, that they left their abodes and retired into the interior. By this time apprehensions of damage to the Canal, and especially to the locks and fortifications, began to assail the engineering force, who had pooh-poohed any idea of the kind from the first, and it was decided in the evening that the following day should be spent in a minute survey of the principal works, to determine whether it was necessary to put off again for a time the official opening that had already been so often postponed. Considerable alarm was felt by all concerned, and

distinguished seismologists had expressed their opinion that the shocks already felt presaged a more serious disturbance. And they were right in their surmise.

In the night of December 26, about two o'clock in the morning, there was a tremendous convulsion of the earth and sea. The fleets rocked violently in the roadsteads, and many of the war vessels were cast upon the shore, some of them for quite a distance inland, the land having sunk and risen again in the intervals of the earthquake, which lasted, with frequent and often prolonged intervals, until eight o'clock of the next day, December 27. When things quieted down somewhat, and the tremors had ceased, the survivors in the immediate vicinity of the catastrophe found the sea full of floating débris, the shore sprinkled with dead bodies of men and animals, and the region of the Panama Canal covered with a dense pall of cloud and smoke which was absolutely impenetrable, for those who made a bold attempt to see what was hidden beneath it were driven back by irrespirable gases. In this condition matters remained for several days. Slight earth tremors followed for a day or two at lengthening intervals and presently ceased. The nations of the earth vied with each other in alleviating the distress of the unfortunate sufferers by the disaster and all watched in breath-

less suspense for the end. At length, on the very morning set for the grand celebration of the completion of the great work, the greatest ever undertaken and carried through by mankind, the sun shone down bright and clear upon what was to have been the scene of the great festival. Where the cities of Panama and Colon had stood, where the magnificent works of the Canal and the mighty fortifications, constructed after years of toil and the expenditure of hundreds of millions, had been, now rolled the mingled waters of the two great oceans in a strait fifty miles wide and deep enough, as afterward ascertained, for safe navigation in any part. And so man's dream of centuries became an accomplished fact by natural forces in a single night.

And so this was the explanation of the librarian's cryptic reference to the "Strait of Panama!" I was overwhelmed with the revelation, and fell into a reverie, from which I was roused by the voice of my guide urging me to haste, as our time was short and there was still much to do.

"All right," I said, "I will be with you in a moment. But about woman suffrage. What ever became of that movement?"

While I had been occupied in reading about the Panama Canal, the librarian had been busily refreshing his memory on the other points I had

inquired about, and he now proceeded to enlighten me.

"The woman suffrage movement was but a ripple on the surface of the stream of historical events. Conspicuous for a moment, it soon vanished. Suffrage was obtained by the women earlier in America than in England. In the latter country their success was put off nearly fifty years by the crazy act of one of the militants, so-called, a young and giddy girl of eighteen who got so wrought up by the speeches and behavior of her elders, that, to make herself a heroine and a martyr to the cause, she assassinated the Prime Minister. In America full suffrage was obtained by the women soon after your time, but the biologically valuable ones seem to have given it up at an early date, preferring the home to the forum or the mart and leaving the franchise to be exercised mainly by the screechers, and so it gradually fell away, and women confessed by their action that a strict division of labor and duties between the sexes was better than to confuse them."

"Screechers?" I remarked. "What do you mean by that?"

He turned to one of the boxes of plates and removing one inserted it into the stereoscope, as I must call it, in default of a better name.

"From a dictionary of the time," he said curtly,

and I saw the following definition on the plate before me.

"*Screecher.* A term of opprobrium applied by their opponents to a body of women who maintain that, excepting superficial differences of physique, men and women are essentially the same, and that their duties and functions in life, with the single exception of those concerning the continuation of the species, should be identical. Being mostly composed of sterile women or spinsters, the sect is gradually dying out."

"Well," I said, as I drew a deep breath, "that seems a little unfair to a lot of rather estimable women, so far as I knew anything about them."

CHAPTER XIII

THE GREAT EXPULSION

AS no reply was forthcoming to this remark, I broached the last thing I happened to have in mind to make inquiry about, and that was my guide's passing remark about "the great expulsion." And so I asked about that. Upon this question the librarian was more fluent, and evidently looked upon the subject as one of superior importance.

"Early in the twentieth century," he began, "China began to stretch her huge body and yawn as she awoke from her long sleep of about two thousand years. During this sleep she had dreamed that she was the celestial kingdom, specially favored by the gods, the happy nation secure and contented. She was the most ancient nation in the world and had maintained her integrity longer than any other people that had ever lived on the face of the earth. From this sleep and this opium dream she was rudely aroused by the pin-pricks of the international busybodies of the white race, who had been constantly enlarg-

ing the field of their pernicious activities until they were apparently upon the point of dominating the entire globe. She awoke to find herself surrounded on every hand by meddlesome foes, who seemed to her to be bent upon tearing her to pieces, and practically enslaving her people, as she saw they had already done with others of what they called the inferior races. Now and then they hypocritically bewailed what they were pleased to call the white man's burden, to wit, the administration of other people's affairs to suit themselves. Looking upon this, however, as a Divinely appointed mission, they bent their backs cheerfully to the burdensome task of exploiting the resources of the less powerful peoples and sucking them dry, with the apparent purpose of concentrating the wealth and power of the entire world in the hands of the white race, settled mainly in Europe and the Americas. But in trying to pursue the same course with China, they reckoned badly. Her mass was too great, her inertia too persistent for them to produce any impression upon for a long time. But at length she awoke and remained awake, and her energies developed and gathered strength until the European Frankenstein was appalled at the monster he had created. When the regeneration of China was fairly begun, she appropriated with avidity all that the detested for-

eigners could teach her, and then continued her advance with all the brilliant genius that had blazed forth in a previous era before the time of Christ, under the dynasty of Han. Huge armies were formed and drilled, improvements in weapons and ammunition invented, fleets created and manned, and improved methods of administration adopted, until, almost before they had time to comprehend what was occurring, the peoples of Europe found themselves confronted by a redoubtable antagonist whom they could no longer bully or despise. A good deal of work had been done in the vast back country, masked from hostile inspection by great commercial and industrial activity along the coast and the northern and southern boundaries. And then, about the middle of the twentieth century, to the consternation of all the foreign nations who had flourishing colonies at various points upon Chinese territory, they received one day simultaneous notice to withdraw from the country altogether. They had a hurried conference and refused. All of the Europeans, who were a good deal handicapped by their immense distance from their base of supplies, had expected that Japan would be the monkey to pull their chestnuts out of the fire, but to their astonishment she held herself aloof, having, it was afterward ascertained, a secret understanding with

China involving an extensive scheme of operations that were to continue into an indefinite future,—a perpetual treaty, so to speak, involving, as it afterward appeared, world-shaking consequences. So they were left to their own devices, and after a few battles and skirmishes, on land and sea, they were all forced to leave and were magnanimously allowed by the reigning monarch to take everything portable with them. After this uncomfortable experience, as may well be imagined, the whites were very chary of interfering with the nation they had so long held in contempt, but which had now become so powerful, and they were satisfied to retain their commercial relations with her and with Japan, without any further attempts to exercise any form of administrative or financial control within her borders.

"And this status lasted for above a hundred years, China having entered the family of nations, and, though extremely jealous of her own rights, conducting herself with the most amiable consideration for the rights of others. Indeed one or two of the white nations, less truculent and revengeful than the others naïvely confessed that they had learned from China many things greatly to their advantage. After some hundreds of years the civilization of the whites, which had for a long time been evidently decaying, began to be in

a perilous condition. Great changes had taken place in the relations of the European peoples, some nations had disappeared, died out or been absorbed by others, and there were plain indications here and there of a relapse into barbarism. This was especially so in the United States of America, which retained the old title, although it had long since become an empire."

"Excuse me for interrupting you," I said, "but I am curious to know and unable to understand how my nation could ever have fallen back into barbarism. If it is not too much to ask of you, could you not tell me?"

"There is hardly time to enter into details," was the reply, "but the starting point of the decay was financial difficulties. Your people and all the white peoples, in their anxiety to possess the earth, and each nation for itself, had piled up enormous debts, impossible of payment, and they all eventually found themselves plunged into bankruptcy. Immense wealth, which was wrested from the earth by the toilers, was squandered and dissipated by the upper classes and the governments in all kinds of unproductive enterprises and personal luxury and extravagance. The products of labor were gathered into the hands of a few and passed on by them to the governments, which spent them as fast as they could, giving notes or bonds in re-

turn. These evidences of debt were held by the few, and as they required interest from the governments, who in turn were constantly begging for more, a vicious circle was formed, by which the wealth of each country was constantly passing from capitalist to government and back again, while the unavoidable waste involved in the support of both and the losses of war was continually replenished by the labor of the masses of the people. As the governments acted merely as agents and could not hold capital on their own account, it became more and more concentrated in the hands of a comparatively small number of the people. This went on for hundreds of years, the rich looking upon the relation of master and man, of rich and poor as ordained by Heaven, and destined to endure forever, until, in the progress of education, the mass of the people became fairly aroused to the injustice of it all, and began to be recalcitrant about taxes. By this time they were fairly ground down into the dust. The extravagance of governments in administrative expenses and wars had been so great, the debts so enormous, that the interest and running expenses could not be paid. Interest alone for many nations nearly equaled the total production of wealth every year, and the producers, the people, were on the verge of starvation. So they refused to contribute

longer to the support of a social fabric from which they derived no satisfaction, and the burden of upholding which increased from year to year, with no let-up. Attempts were made to collect taxes by force, but met with resistance, sullen and sporadic at first, then general and violent. The scenes of the French Revolution of the eighteenth century were repeated with added horrors, over Europe and America, and when the governments had been abolished and the debt-holders exterminated, there was little left of the civilization you knew. No Napoleon arose to curb the multitude, and the destruction of property, which the mob in blind rage carried out without discrimination, not only involved the instrumentalities by which your extraordinary industrial civilization had been developed, but had even destroyed the means by which they had been produced, for when the mad orgy was over, it was found that not a single man or woman was left in Europe or America who understood the construction of a machine, the principles of the battery, or the manufacture of any instruments of precision. The entire foundation of your present social régime had been swept away, and there was nothing left but a huge multitude of ignorant or half-educated men, who had never been far removed from savagery, with sturdy bodies and willing heads and hands, but lacking

in brains. And so the whites remained for hundreds of years until a natural recuperation of their nervous system started them again on the upward path.

"The great revolution and fall of the white race, which I have just described in as few words as possible, did not occur until after the great expulsion, but, as I have already said, the first symptoms of decay were already visible to the eagle eyes of the outside peoples who, and especially the Chinese and Japanese, were ready to pounce upon their prey, when they thought the time was ripe. And this came about in the twenty-sixth century of our era.

"The Chinese Empire had now become the most formidable military power that had ever been known. She had a population of more than 600,000,000, a standing army or permanent military force, of 8,000,000 highly trained soldiers, with competent commanders and unlimited resources, and a potential army, including the reserves, all of whom had good military training, of 40,000,000 men. In her own territory she had long been impregnable, but she had been known from time immemorial as a peace-loving nation, and none of the other peoples had any reason to fear aggression on her part. The nations of Europe, however, and the white race generally, kept up their

quarrels and bickerings, and were a constant source of annoyance to the more quiet nations along the border. They were constantly making raids and sending out what they called punitive expeditions to avenge the death of rascals who had been caught red-handed by other weaker nations and put out of the way. In the course of some of these forays their armed forces disturbed the rest of the great dragon, and finally China was stirred to wrath and determined to retaliate. But as her patience had been long enduring, so her anger when once aroused was the more terrible, and she entered upon a course of action the most momentous in the history of the world.

"The empire was now in the control of a dynasty claiming a lineal descent from the great Vouti of the Han dynasty, and under a succession of able administrators and military geniuses carried to a successful conclusion the most stupendous military enterprise ever conceived by a human mind.

"China and Japan were by this time and had been for hundreds of years in perfect accord. Close relations had also been established with the princes of India, where Germany had supplanted the English as titular masters. The United States had long since withdrawn from the Philippines and her other island possessions in the Pacific and

the only foreigners of the white race at that time exercising sovereignty in Asiatic territory were the Germans, French and Russians. The Dutch possessions had passed to Germany hundreds of years before.

"Such was the general situation when, like a thunderbolt from the blue China issued a notice to Europe that all European people and European troops must be withdrawn from Asiatic territory, that henceforth Asia was to be held by Asiatics and the whites were to confine their turbulent energies to Europe and America. Nothing was said at the time about Africa, but we were already established here, and the whites had already met with some unwelcome experiences in trying to meddle with us. The white nations were given a year in which to retire and then the East became silent again. There was a disposition in Europe at first to ridicule the proclamation or pay no attention to it at all, but the wiser heads apparently foresaw trouble and urged conciliatory measures. To all remonstrances China turned a deaf ear, and when they became insistent, she expelled the embassies from her borders with contumely and they returned to Europe empty handed and boiling over with indignation. Europe was in a quandary. She was still inclined to despise the Asiatic as an antagonist, but she had already had several un-

successful contests with the Chinese, and when she looked forward to a war with an empire that could, if necessary, throw forty million men into the field, she hesitated. In the end, after prolonged consultation, they concluded to join forces and make common cause against the common enemy. It should be Europe against Asia, if it came to that, and despite the seeming odds against them, so far as numbers were concerned, they could not conceive that defeat was possible, so ingrained was their contempt for the fighting qualities of the foe.

" So a shout of defiance was their answer. The Emperor, who had expected this reply and made thorough preparations for it, immediately issued another notice, which was sent, however, to but one nation, Russia. Although Russia, like the other whites, had been compelled to give up her holdings in Manchuria and Mongolia and retire, like the other white people, beyond the Chinese border, they still held Siberia, and had large garrisons along the coast and strung along the northern border of the Chinese Empire, and had been for centuries making little forays and skirmishing along the border with the Chinese and Japanese forces that were constantly stationed there.

" This new proclamation, directed to Russia alone, was peremptory, and demanded, although the year allowed for retirement in the former

notice had not expired, that, in consequence of the recent action of the European powers, the Russian army and all the Russian and other white settlers should leave immediately. Two weeks were allowed for the removal, and if said removal were not begun before the lapse of that time, they were to be expelled by force. The Chinese army was already in motion, an unknown force had been mobilized long before, but the only reply was a rapid concentration of the Russians, and the hurried despatch of additional troops from the West. One week passed by, and the Chinese, seeing that no indication of compliance with the proclamation could be detected, but that everything showed an intention to resist, issued a final notice, with the truculent ultimatum that the patience of the Emperor having been exhausted, and every effort for peaceable withdrawal rejected, no further communication with the Russians would be maintained, that a forward movement had already begun, and as a permanent and terrible lesson to the white race, the European military forces in Northern Asia, as far as they had been brought together in battle array, were to be surrounded, captured, and exterminated, no quarter being given or asked. The European forces were estimated to have been about 600,000 men, and the Chinese and Japanese together probably mounted into the millions, pos-

sibly four or five millions. The Europeans were surrounded after desperate resistance, and were massacred to the last man. Not one survived to report upon the battle, and the only news Europe received was sent by telegraph men in the vicinity, who announced that the Chinese had ceased operations after the extinction of the army, and had done no further injury to persons or property, but that all Europeans were hastily abandoning the country and departing for the west.

"There was a universal cry of horror throughout Europe and America. The indescribable savagery of the massacre recalled the days of the old barbarians, Genghis Khan and the like, who had ravaged the earth centuries before. It was seen that the old instincts of the Asiatic had survived and had burst the slight bonds imposed by a veneer of civilization, and that Europe was once more destined to face the horrible specter of Asiatic conquest. This was the view of the nations of Europe and America. The other side was presented by a proclamation jointly issued by Japan and China, stating in plain language that no vituperation and no pleading would suffice to alter their determination to rid Asia forever of what they described as the mischief-making white race, masterful, it was acknowledged, but ignorant, cruel, selfish and domineering. The massacre of

the Siberian forces had been absolutely necessary to convince Europe of the determination and ability, as well as the resources, that lay back of the public notification they had sent out that Asia must be abandoned by the whites. They had been warned that extermination was intended and would be ruthlessly carried out. That policy was to be continued until the continent of Asia was again in the possession of its original peoples, free from any admixture of foreigners, and especially of whites.

"A lull followed, during which, for the sake of concentrating their forces for another conflict, the whites continued their sullen retirement. Germany, proud and haughty as she was disposed to be, joined in the movement, and slowly removed her troops and citizens from India, exhibiting a reluctance which called forth a little prodding from the native population assisted by a detachment of troops from China, and snarling and showing her teeth like a tiger driven from the jungle. But she went, like the rest.

"After the clearing of Asia, of course, commercial relations with Europe and America were cut off entirely, and all means of intercommunication were severed, so that for fifty years the nations of Europe knew little of what was going on the other side of the Ural Mountains. Occasional

attempts to learn more were invariably frustrated. Most of the spies were caught and destroyed, at any rate they never reappeared, and the few who managed to escape all perils and return to Europe brought no information, for they had not been able to penetrate beyond the outer fringe of the countries they attempted to enter. And so passed another fifty years or so. A new generation had come upon the scene, and the great catastrophe was almost forgotten, excepting for the occasional prophet of woe who would remind his contemporaries that their lesson had not been thoroughly learned and that the yellow peril still lurked behind the forbidding mountain chains that separated them from Europe.

"The lesson, as it appeared, had really been given in vain. The white nations had fully recuperated from the terrible blow they had received and, although their financial burdens were almost beyond endurance, their progress in the art and science of war had been such, thanks to their constant practice on one another, that confidence had been regained, and a powerful league was formed, with pledges of enormous masses of men and military supplies, with a view of bringing the mastery of the world once more to the supreme test. Their ablest strategists worked for years over the problems involved, and their plans were almost

ripe, when another bolt from the blue was launched upon Europe from the hitherto silent and mysterious East.

" It seems that during this prolonged interval of peace, with all sources of information cut off from the white nations, the great Empires of Asia, China, India and Japan, with numerous auxiliaries, had been gradually creeping toward the eastern confines of Europe, and they now had an enormous multitude stretched along the line, untold millions — the size of their armies never was known — all thoroughly disciplined and under the command of capable men.

" Just at this critical time, then, when Europe had expected to take Asia unawares, came a proclamation from the three Emperors, addressed to no individual, but to the entire white race, a notice that their preparations for war were well known, that they had been constantly watched from the beginning, that it was clearly evident that the dreadful chastisement of fifty years ago had produced no lasting effect, that they retained all their former characteristics as a meddling, domineering race, that there could be no peace for anyone in their neighborhood, and consequently the three Emperors, much to their regret on account of the bloodshed and suffering that must ensue, had come to the unanimous and irrevocable decision, in which

they had the enthusiastic support of their armies and people that the white race must leave the Old World and betake themselves to the New one, upon pain of extermination if they refused.

"This unprecedented communication was received with howls of defiance and derision. A feverish activity set in immediately. The people of Europe no longer despised their enemy, and recognized the magnitude of the task that confronted them. But the Emperors were already fully prepared and without further delay, crossed the mountains and deployed immense forces all along the line, armies so large and so closely in touch with one another, that a contest seemed almost hopeless. But the whites never lacked courage, and now there was added the valor of despair. They hurled themselves again and again at the steadily advancing foe, but were able to produce no apparent impression upon them. The steady progress of the Asiatic forces proved irresistible, and at length, finding themselves flanked, the European armies, numbering about 3,000,000 of men, were concentrated in what seemed to be an advantageous position in the Eastern portion of Germany and resolved to await the attack and risk their fortunes in a single great battle. Their frantic efforts were all useless, the odds were too great, the yellow armies in dense masses swung

around their sides and rear with relentless precision, enveloping them entirely, and this huge army was shot and hewn to pieces, only a few thousand stragglers escaping out of that immense body of men. After this decisive conflict the Emperors rested, and awaited the answer to their ultimatum.

"The blow to the whites was terrific, not alone to their military strength, but to their self-confidence, their pride, their overweening self-esteem. All Europe bewailed her losses. Every house was in mourning and the futility of further resistance was plain. Their religious teachers recognized it as a chastisement from the Almighty, and not a few were ready to point to it as a fulfillment of the prophecy in the Revelation of St. John.

"And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river, the river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sun-rising. And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, as it were frogs; for they are spirits of demons, working signs; which go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew, Armageddon."

" How plainly it is all foretold, they said. The kings are come from the sun-rising. The dragon is China, the beast is Japan, and the false prophet, that is India, with her Buddha. The frogs are the yellow bellies. The sixth bowl has been emptied, the war was the war of the great day of God, the Almighty, and the place was the plain of Armageddon.

" Many attempts were afterward made to estimate the size of the Oriental armies. The military men for the most part agreed that for the carrying out of their encircling movement in the smooth and machine-like manner it was conducted, not less than twenty millions of men were necessary, and a few even put the figures as high as forty million. The Europeans were at a loss to understand how this vast force could have been fed, clothed and properly supplied with the munitions of war, but, so far as was ever ascertained, the explanation lay in the fact that the Oriental army was really a moving population. The long years through which the affairs of Asia had been a sealed book to Europe had been occupied with successive migrations of the military forces, with all their women and children, across the continent to the Eastern frontier of Europe. At the necessary intervals they halted as long as was necessary to break up the land and sow and harvest a crop.

Vast herds of horses and cattle were taken along, and thus ample supplies of food, of the frugal sort that seems to be sufficient to satisfy and sustain the Oriental were always at hand. Portable factories for arms and ammunition were transported, with some difficulty, from place to place, roads constructed and water courses dammed and bridged, and all done so slowly and deliberately that when they finally arrived at their destination they were prepared for immediate action. They had more than fifty years for this operation, and the event showed that it had been well planned and well executed. Once again the haughty European bowed before the superior might of the Asiatic."

At this point my host interrupted to say that our time was growing short, and we still had our visit to the storehouse to make. The librarian, who had delivered his harangue with great enthusiasm, nodded and went on.

"There is not much more that I can tell you. With wailing and much gnashing of teeth, with muttered threats of vengeance, the whites prepared to abandon the territory that had been held from time immemorial by their ancestry. All their hallowed shrines, the monuments and other structures that commemorated the past glory and power of the race, the lands and forests, the streams and broad and fertile fields that were dear

to them from their associations and memories, all, all had to be left behind. They were allowed to remove whatever they could, but that was comparatively little. Sporadic expulsions had taken place in previous ages, but the agony and suffering caused by the parting from all that was held dear had been confined to a single people and a comparatively restricted locality. But this was on a huge scale, and entailed untold calamities in its train.

" Commerce had, in this age, attained enormous proportions and all the vessels that covered the oceans were pressed into the service of the East. About 10,000 transports were collected and were kept busy assisting in the transfer. These vessels carried, on an average, 1,000 persons apiece, and in this way the 400,000,000 of people were conveyed to the Western Hemisphere in about 50 trips, which took about two years. The more northerly nations, of Teutonic blood, and the Russians, of the Slavs, mostly went to North America, and the Southern nations to South America. There were many exceptions, of course, notably a large body of Germans who preferred the Southern temperate zone, and a considerable number of French and Spanish who chose the warmer sections of the Northern countries. But the general trend was as I have stated.

" And that was ' the great expulsion.'

"As the last contingent left the shores of Europe the officer in command received this farewell message from the three Emperors:

"'Now you can quarrel with one another in peace.'"

With a courteous bow he ended his discourse, and in deep meditation on the dreadful history that had been recounted to me, I followed my host from the hall.

CHAPTER XIV

THE STOREROOM

WE passed down a long corridor, with the same exquisite finish of walls and flooring and entered another spacious room, which proved to be the storeroom. There were several persons already in the room, on our arrival, but they paid us the compliment of only a cursory glance and went on with the business that had brought them there. The walls were lined with shelving containing all kinds of goods, and as I gazed about me I was reminded somewhat of a general country store, or of a large department store, in the city, where everything needed can be purchased without leaving the building. There were packages of cloth, of all hues and textures, barrels and boxes of merchandise, bins containing grains, coffees, and the like, chemicals, in fact, all kinds of supplies required for utility or comfort. There were several attendants, alert young men and women, who did up packages as required, or directed those who carried bags or other receptacles to the places where they would find the articles they were after.

Of course, after what I had already learned of this singular community, I did not expect to see any purchasing of goods or any use of money, but it seemed odd, nevertheless, to see no scales or weighing machines in use anywhere. But on reflection I saw that they would have been superfluous, for each visitor took as much as he or she needed, and any adjustments necessary for combinations of any kind would be done at home. Some of the callers had to ask for directions, but others went to the shelves or bins and helped themselves. While we were looking about the room, two men and a woman entered with new supplies, one of the men with what appeared to be small brass hardware of some kind, which he dumped on the floor and left for the attendants to sort out, the other with a huge coil of copper wire, about as much as he could carry without staggering, which he also dumped on the floor, as he rubbed his shoulder in relief, and the woman with a lot of woven stuff, which she carefully deposited with her own hands on one of the shelves containing other stuffs of similar appearance.

"Everything here practically explains itself," remarked my friend. "But there are some bins that may interest you, who retain, I presume, some of the barbaric tastes of your people," and he conducted me to the farther end of the apartment.

What a sight was there! Precious stones and precious metals in profusion. Boxes full of gems, diamonds, rubies, emeralds, cut and uncut, bins half filled to the brim with gold, silver and copper, in ingots and sheets. As we were looking them over, a man came up and began turning over the plates of gold. My guide held a brief conversation with him and then told me that the negro was a plumber, and was selecting some sheets of metal for the lining of a bath tub.

" It is for my next door neighbor," he explained; " he has had a silver lining, but finds it tarnishes too easily, and he is having it replaced by gold, like mine, which he greatly admires." As he spoke another negro came along and carelessly threw several ingots of gold into the bin containing the others.

" A miner," said my friend, and led me a little way along the wall to a row of metal boxes, one of which he opened, simply raising the lid, for it was unlocked. Inside, to my surprise I saw money, bills and coin, not unlike what I had been more or less familiar with since childhood.

" Yes," he said, seeing my look of interrogation, " this is money. You see we do have to use it once in a while. Whenever my duty calls me to the other side, I have to take some with me for use in those parts. Once in a while, too, one of

our young people will take a notion to see something of the world, and he comes here and takes what he thinks he shall need."

So saying, he took a considerable sum from the box and tucked it away in his clothing. He also took several ingots of gold, with a purpose which I did not learn until afterwards.

"When you return to your people for good," he said, "you are welcome to take all the money you want, and also to load your pockets with all the gold, silver and gems you think you can carry with you. We have plenty here, and they are little used. A few of the younger women seem fond of precious stones as ornaments, but are rather looked down upon for it by their companions, who mostly prefer flowers. We use them chiefly in architectural work, where ornamentation of a special kind is thought desirable. In these other boxes," and he opened two of them to show me, "are monies of other nations in the Western Hemisphere and of many on this side of the ocean in Europe and Asia, for the other peoples are not yet quite as far advanced as we are, and still cling to many of their old habits. But they are progressing. They are progressing. But now let us be off. It is nearly four o'clock, and that is the hour I had fixed upon for our journey."

So we left the building, I with my brain in a whirl, and he with the steady dignified gait which so became him. We directed our steps toward his house. On arriving there we saw nothing of the rest of the family, but found food upon the table, and we sat down and partook of it with appetite.

After the meal he took me to the rear of the house, and I had my first opportunity to see at close range one of the traveling or flying machines. There were two standing side by side, one much larger than the other and of somewhat different construction.

"This is the one we take," he said, and immediately began to busy himself about the larger of the two. He went over it carefully on every side, examining everything minutely, and testing it here and there, as a gentle whir now and then indicated. When he was satisfied, he turned to me with the remark:

"Everything is ready, but it may be rather cool over the water, and I will get some wraps. Don't meddle with the machine while I am gone," and he entered the house.

The caution was entirely unnecessary, for I would not have touched the thing with a ten foot pole. But I took the opportunity to walk around it and view it from all sides. It looked to me like

a sort of coach body set and firmly fixed upon a platform, which extended a couple of feet or so on each side of it. In front was what I took to be a windshield, highly polished and tapering to a point, looking like silver, but I have no idea what the material was. At the rear was a sort of dynamo, and a propeller, the latter directed backwards, but apparently provided with a sort of universal joint enabling it to be shifted in any direction, though how such a joint could be compatible with the necessary stability and security I could not imagine.

In the coach were comfortable seats and several small wheels and levers, whose uses, of course, I was unable to divine. And now my friend emerged from the building with a load of stuff and came over. He threw the wraps on the seats and tucked several small packages underneath.

"Food for the journey," he said, and walked around the machine, making a final inspection.

"Well, we are ready now. Take your seat, please," and I did so, at the same time folding one of the soft, thick blankets or robes about me, with a curious feeling that this was to be the most momentous experience of my lifetime.

CHAPTER XV

THE JOURNEY

THE negro walked around the machine for the last time, took his seat beside me, wrapped his robes about him, and turned a small wheel directly in front of his seat. The machine rose steadily in the air, in a vertical direction without any preliminary start in contact with the ground, until we had reached a considerable height, which I was unable to estimate, having never ascended in a balloon or aëroplane before. When things began to look pretty small below, and I thought we must be at least a mile up, he swung a small lever on his right hand and a huge pair of wings, which I had not seen in my cursory survey of the machine so nicely had they been folded or tucked away, shot out from the sides rising and curving a little higher than the body itself, like the wings of a monstrous bird. They were motionless, and in reply to my question, I got a curt reply that they were of use simply to maintain an even keel and preserve a proper balance. He was still busy with his manipulations, and I under-

stood that I must remain quiet for a time. We now stopped rising, swung around and headed, so far as I could judge from the compass, in a bee line toward the northwest. The handling of wheels and levers now ceased, and my companion settled back in his seat with a grunt of satisfaction.

We were now scudding along at a very rapid rate. I could see on our right a vast extent of settled country, covered with small houses such as I had already seen so many of, and on our left stretched a considerable territory that seemed to be unsettled, much of it covered with forests, while straight ahead, and far in the distance I could see the ocean.

Now, I thought, is the time for me to draw out a little more information from this black phenomenon, and so I ventured to say:

"The supplies of food you packed away for the journey we are taking seem to me hardly enough for a trip of six or seven thousand miles. By the way, where do you expect to land?"

"Somewhere in the vicinity of New York. Probably on some small island near the eastern end of Long Island. I have a number of friends there, who will receive me as a guest for a short stay, and furnish me with an appropriate change of clothes. We have to provide for that beforehand, for it would never do to allow this machine

to be inspected by a white man, or to have them know who I am, and what I am there for. As to the food supply, how long do you suppose we are going to be in making that distance?"

"Oh, a week or so," I replied.

"The trip will take us about thirty-five hours," he said with a smile; "we are going now about two hundred miles an hour, which will carry us seven thousand miles in thirty-five hours, and bring us to our stopping place at three o'clock in the morning or thereabouts. I always calculate the journey so as to make the few hundred miles when we are approaching the coast during the night, to avoid detection."

Then he added: "You see, we are already over the water."

And sure enough we had begun to cross the ocean, which rolled and heaved far below. Now we began to descend and were soon racing along only a few hundred feet above the surface, where we could hear the noise of breaking wave tops, for the wind was getting high. In a few minutes we were out of sight of land, and shooting ahead like a shot from a cannon. It began to grow a little cool as the evening drew on, and the negro bent over and adjusted some small apparatus near the floor, the nature of which I could not discern. As he straightened himself up he said briefly:

"It will be cool during the night, and we must be warmed up a little."

Sure enough, in a few minutes, I felt a gentle warmth stealing around me, warming the seat I occupied, warming my feet, and warming to some extent even the air of the coach in which we were traveling. I felt both comfortable and secure. After all I had seen and learned I had so much confidence in my companion that I felt as safe as if I had been traveling in a Pullman car.

Neither of us spoke for a while, but presently he turned to me and smiled.

"I am going to give you a bit of a surprise," he said, "but don't be frightened, whatever may happen."

So saying he gave the small wheel directly in front of his seat a vigorous twist, and we shot upwards with a velocity that scared me half to death. The air rushed by us from above, where we were not protected so well as in front, with a force and a loud whistling that held me speechless. I clung to my seat, expecting any moment to be blown away, and my face must have expressed vividly the horror and fright I was suffering from, for as he glanced at me he gave the wheel another twirl and we fell rapidly to our former level, and continued to forge straight ahead.

"I merely wanted to give you a little lesson,"

he said, " but I am sorry it affected you so unpleasantly. That was the effect of the moon. I shut off our connection with the earth entirely for a moment, and so the attraction of gravitation drew us upward. It would not have taken us long to rise out of our atmosphere. I see your nose is bleeding. I did not mean to go so high."

" The moon! " I exclaimed, hardly yet recovered from my nerve-wrecking experience.

" The moon, to be sure. In the ordinary use of these machines we cannot, of course, cut loose from the earth. How to graduate the pull downward so as to allow us to rise easily and maintain any level we choose in the air, was an extremely difficult problem, and one that our scientists were at work upon for nearly five hundred years before it was solved. Our methods are now perfected. By an ingenious arrangement of slides in the bottom of the machine, with myriads of minute perforations of the insulating material, we are able to regulate the pull downward and set it off against the pull upward of the sun or moon, so that we can remain suspended at any level we please. The balance alone sometimes troubles the novice. Here we are, for instance, over the ocean. We cannot fall. There are no boilers or cylinders or tanks to explode, as in your aëroplanes. There is no fuel to leak away. There is no possibility of

breakage in any part, for all of our mechanical work, being done, as you have seen, with no hurry and no time limit, is absolutely flawless. There is nothing that can break under the application of any force short of a bolt of lightning. If that should strike us, of course, it would be the end of everything for you and me. But such chances are infinitesimal and we may disregard them. But the great danger for the novice is that of turning turtle in a heavy and unexpected gust of wind, a hurricane, for example. We are pretty well provided against anything of the sort, however, by the wings, and by the fact that the center of gravity of the body of the machine lies so low. We have, in addition, at the sides and near the edge of the floor, numerous small slides, by the manipulation of which we can tip the machine to one side or the other as little or as much as we please. This requires constant attention, and though, in our ordinary travel over land, it may usually be neglected to some extent, or at least seldom required, excepting in storms, and then we generally descend wherever we happen to be, out over the ocean, as we are, it becomes a matter of vast importance and requires constant watchfulness. That is the chief reason why I travel so swiftly. I shall have to remain awake until we reach our destination, which means about a day and a half,

including two nights. And at my age," he added, " I like to have my regular sleep."

" So I should think! How smoothly we are running! And with so little noise. But, traveling at the rate we are going, are you not afraid of heated bearings? I should think there would be danger of that."

" Our mechanical work is so perfectly fitted that friction is brought down to a minimum, and, besides, the bearings are constructed of an alloy which renders them almost frictionless. Then there are special arrangements by which the little heat that may be developed is rapidly dissipated, and we are never troubled in that way. As to the noise, the construction of the machine does away with that almost completely. The aëroplanes you remember among your own people were not properly put together, and were not really flying machines, but box kites, pushed by a motor instead of pulled by a string. There were so many wires and ribs and badly adjusted parts that the strain, while they were in operation, produced a terrible rattling and clatter, while the only noise produced by this machine, as you have noticed, is the slight whir due to the passage of air through the propeller, and the rushing or whistling produced by the air ahead as it is cleft by our prow or frontal shield."

We were still rushing along on the same level toward the northwest. Beneath was the gray, heaving ocean and above the clear sky, brilliant with stars. Nothing else was in sight. We had seen no vessel since we started, and now the sun had set long ago and darkness had settled down. I was wearied by all I had gone through during this eventful day, the monotonous gentle whir of the machine was soothing in its effect. I was warm and comfortable in an easy and luxurious cushioned seat, free from all worry and anxiety, and began to feel drowsy in the extreme.

"Go to sleep. There is no reason why you should remain awake," was the last thing I heard, and then came oblivion.

When I awoke, the sun was up and shining down upon us, and the sky was cloudless. We were in for another beautiful day. I greeted my companion with a cheerful "Good morning," which he returned. I could see in his face or manner not the slightest indication that he had passed a sleepless night. We were still heading in the same direction, and were still alone, with nothing in sight but ocean and sky. We breakfasted together upon the simple viands he had provided, with a draught of wine for myself and of water for him.

"Whereabouts do you suppose we are?" I asked, at length.

" I do not know exactly. We are nearly half way to our destination."

" Do you take no observations? " I ventured to say, although I had already seen that he was not prepared for that.

" No," he replied, " they would be useless. I determined my direction before we started, and we travel in a bee line. When we are nearing the line of travel for other vessels, I shall rise so as to be out of sight, and we shall be able to determine our location from above."

" This is the last day I shall be able to converse with you without the danger of being overheard, and so I am anxious to have you understand why I have been showing and explaining so many things to you, and I want you to promise me that after your return to your own people you will tell them what you have seen, how we live, and how determined we are to submit to no interference from others."

" Surely," I said, " I shall be only too eager to tell about all that I have learned, but I am afraid, after what you have been telling me, that I shall be much out of place among these moderns, and probably unable to understand their language."

" You will have no trouble on that score," was the reply; " your people have attained on the present upgrade, very nearly the same position you

left them in. You will find, of course, none of your former friends. They were long since dust. But the material surroundings will seem familiar, and a few years ago, about a century, in fact, a great wave of enthusiasm swept over North America in regard to their ancestral greatness, and among the other things there was brought about a great revival of the language of their fathers. So, when you land, you will find them speaking the same English to which you are accustomed, with only slight variations of words and pronunciation, quite insufficient to cause you any difficulty in conversing with them. They will probably think you are a foreigner from South America, who has learned English from a book, but you will get on well enough.

"And now," he continued, "let me warn you what you are going to find in your old home. There have been some changes in the coast line around New York. You will find the East River somewhat wider and the Hudson somewhat narrower than you have known them. The lower part of the city has sunken a little, and the cellars and lower stories of many buildings have been abandoned. Staten Island is considerably smaller, and the entire coast of New Jersey has been submerged for varying distances back from the old line as you knew it. Coney Island is beneath

the waves. You will not see many other changes. You will find the same old roaring city, with its electric lines of communication underground and above ground. Their old aëroplanes have not been brought out from the dust-bin of antiquity. They are looked upon, I believe, as tending in the wrong direction, and as having been a sort of toy. Your inventors are working on the problem of navigating the air, but along entirely different lines, I am told, and with fair prospects of success.

"But more important matters remain. You will find your countrymen still groaning and sweating and snarling and quarreling in the fetters of an external government not so very different from the one you had been living under. Every man, woman and child you will find constantly objecting to and resisting the imposition of another's will over theirs. Whenever they speak of us at all they call us the 'nigger anarchists,' and yet they themselves are all anarchists at heart. There is not one of them who is not constantly resenting the restraint put upon his activities by the law of the land. The meanest criminal can always justify himself for what he has done. No one acts without a motive which at the time of the action appears to him the best. And there is no person among you who, in the performance of any ac-

tion, does not resent the interference of another. You call yourselves a law-abiding people, and so you are,— under compulsion. When you talk of the necessity of laws, you mean that they are necessary to restrain the activities of other persons, not your own. And the richer and more powerful a man may be, the more keenly he feels that the laws do not apply to him, but that he is a law unto himself. And in all this welter of law and violations of law, none of you see that the law itself produces the violent acts, that your crimes and misdemeanors are to a large extent induced by the very means that have been devised to suppress or prevent them. A man is but a grown-up boy, and there is no surer way to have your apples stolen than to put up a trespass sign in the orchard. Stolen waters will always be sweet and bread eaten in secret, pleasant.

" Tell your countrymen from me that law creates the malefactor, that repression makes rebels, that happiness comes to men who are the masters of their own lives, that no man, as the great Lincoln said, is good enough to govern the actions of another man, that freedom is the watchword of humanity; that the love of money is the root of all evil; that greed produces misery and never gives satisfaction; that charity from rich to poor is another name for injustice; that the earth

can produce a plenty for all; that none should be rich and none should be poor; and that every accumulation of property is the result of conscious or unconscious theft, no matter how its nature may be disguised under the euphonious titles of foresight, shrewdness or thrift.

"And then tell them what you have seen among the 'nigger anarchists,' an immense community of persons, living simple lives, with illness almost unknown, working and playing and visiting when and as they wish, with every individual following his own inclinations without outside interference, with no money, no law, no courts, no police, no army, no crime, no rich and no poor, living amicably together as neighbors, always willing to help one another, tolerant of one another's opinions, sympathetic in case of injury or death, with comfortable dwellings and magnificent public buildings constructed by skillful and unselfish citizens, with plenty to eat and drink, with shelter, clothing and warmth free to all, with incomparable means of communicating with each other, and, as you will know from your personal observation before you deliver this message, with impregnable means of defense against all foreign aggression.

"And then tell them that the 'nigger anarchists' are willing to share these blessings with them, that if the whites can reconcile themselves

to the idea of abandoning, once for all, their racial failing of thinking it a duty to regulate the rest of the world in accordance with their own ideas, if they will make up their minds to confine their activities strictly to their own affairs, and specially to abandon forever all attempts to interfere with my people, we are willing to impart our special knowledge to them, to share with them the extraordinary facilities now possessed by ourselves alone, and that we will give them, notwithstanding the risk to ourselves from their possible relapse, all the advice and assistance that we are able to render, to guide them to as happy and contented an existence as we lead ourselves, so that there may be no more crime, no more misery, no more poverty, and no more misfortune among them, but that their entire people may pass their lives in perfect amity with one another and with the rest of the world, and when their time comes, may go with a clear conscience to meet their God."

For a few minutes after this solemn appeal, I remained silent. I hardly knew what to reply, but at length I ventured to say:

"I will deliver your message to my countrymen, but am afraid it will fall on deaf ears."

"I am fully persuaded of that," he replied, "but I have done my duty in the matter, and must leave it so."

"But, tell me, is not the life you describe and the life your people lead in Africa rather a bare and joyless one? Is it not of a somewhat bovine character, like the placid existence of the kine who lie on the green sward and chew their cud in a sort of stupid reverie?"

"How can you make such a comparison as that, after what you have seen? Was there anything bovine or stupid in the librarian with whom you spent an instructive half hour? Did the various persons you saw busied with their occupations seem to you to be dull and without animation? Did you see no evidence of alert and skillful activity in the day you spent with us? Surely you cannot have missed entirely the lesson I intended to give you."

"That is not my meaning, exactly. I should have said that it appeared to me that the life you have described might be extremely monotonous and uninteresting. Variety is the spice of life, and you have nothing, so far as I have seen, to break into the dullness of a life where there is no competition, no rivalry, nothing to spur one to extraordinary effort —"

"No chance to quarrel, to look up to heights beyond your reach, or down upon fellowmen below you, who are striving to raise themselves out of the depths, no opportunity for marauding ex-

peditions, no one to conquer and win a glorious renown by putting your heel on his neck," and he would have continued his bitter tirade, if I had not interrupted him with:

"No, no. I simply meant to say that such a life as you live seems rather colorless. You have no distractions, no way of passing time agreeably when work is over, no amusements, and so on."

"Oh," he said, with a smile, "I will confess that I misunderstood. We have distractions enough, fully as many as you have. We are fond of games, we have good theaters, the young people have their outdoor games, some of which you witnessed, and their balls and parties, and we have finer music, probably, than you have ever heard. I presume you are not aware that the negro race is the only really musical race that ever existed."

"Nonsense," I exclaimed, "how preposterous!"

"Nevertheless it is a fact. The negro race, the portion you knew, had never been civilized, but at one time, when all Europe was still a wilderness, the people occupying the interior of Africa were in a state of high civilization. The Egyptians received the first impulse from Ethiopia. They acknowledged that themselves. The negro race, not by conquest, but by migration, penetrated far

into Asia and Europe, where the traces of their former presence can still be detected in the curly hair and flattened nose of numerous families in southeastern Europe, and from that source wherever their blood has mingled with that of the peoples. And among other ineradicable evidences of the far-reaching effects of this negro migration is to be numbered the musical ability of the Europeans which, while extending more or less over the whole continent, is more concentrated in the southeast and more diluted and more sporadic in its manifestations in the west and north. The negro race is the only innately musical race, as a race, that the world has seen, and even to this day, when the influence of their genius in this respect is so widely extended, the negro is the only man that can beat perfect time."

"Well, I must say, that is rather an extraordinary statement," I said, "considering that so many of the great musical composers in Europe have had straight hair."

"Very few, and those not the greatest," was the reply, "and although the curling hair had been bred out of them, the musical taint had not. The brain often transmits ancestral qualities longer than the other bodily organs."

This gave me something more to think about, and I lapsed into silent meditation. On, on, we

sped like an arrow, hour after hour, and I began to feel astonished at my own equanimity and complete sense of security, while rushing through space at such a tremendous speed, and with a man whom I had only known for a little more than a day. And a negro, too! To be sure I had seen plenty of reasons for altering my opinions about negroes. He was up, and I was down. There could be no doubt about that. And yet, notwithstanding his enormous superiority to me, intellectually, physically and morally, he was treating me altogether as an equal as nearly as it was possible to do so. His manner was cordial and intimate, and he made me feel that I was his actual inferior, more by leading me by slow degrees to perceive and recognize the fact myself, than by any marked assertion of his own position. If I felt, now and then, as if I were being instructed it was because I felt like a pupil, and not that he conducted himself like a master. He was as kind and as considerate of my feelings as a man could be.

But our conversation lagged, and gradually I fell into a doze. We had passed the tropical regions and it began to grow a little cool again. As I pulled my wraps together, I looked up and found to my surprise that the sun was near the horizon in the west, and that our journey therefore, if our calculations were correct, was nearly over.

I knew we were to arrive at three or four o'clock in the morning, and made up my mind to get a good rest beforehand, and the sun had no sooner set than I snuggled down in my seat and began to doze.

CHAPTER XVI

MY OLD HOME

I THINK I must have already fallen asleep when I was suddenly aroused by an awful jerk and opening my eyes, found that we were shooting rapidly upwards.

"What is the matter?" I exclaimed, with a feeble effort at wit. "Has the horse run away?"

"We are nearing the track of vessels," he replied, "and must mount out of sight. There is one now just below the horizon. I hope you will feel no inconvenience from the height at which we shall travel. I do not think we need rise more than a mile, or a mile and a half. We have only about 1500 miles more to go — seven hours, say."

As we rose, the cold increased, and he stooped and turned on the heat, as I had seen him do before. I began to feel warm and comfortable and took to slumber again.

Another jolt and I awoke to find that we were descending toward the earth. It was dark and I could see that the sky was overcast, for not a star was visible, but it was not raining, and the

atmosphere was mild. Far below I could barely distinguish land and sea. Here and there were twinkling lights, and as we sank lower I perceived that some of these were on the water, evidently the lights of vessels, and those on land were some distance apart, probably the lights of watchers or public lights along highways and railways. Presently we began to go much slower, and, on looking directly down I saw that we were hovering above an island of a few acres in extent, in a large bay containing many others like it.

"Peconic Bay," he muttered, and our machine began to waver and move a little to one side or the other as he prepared to descend. Now I could discern a small house against a background of trees, and in the lighted doorway a human form, which shortly emerged and became lost in the obscurity of the night. Now we were gradually settling down immediately above a small enclosure surrounded by a high fence, and as it looked to me not much larger than our apparatus. However, thanks to the negro's skillful manipulation of his little wheels and levers, we glided down into it and finally touched bottom as gently as a falling feather, and stepped out upon the solid ground.

The man I had seen in the doorway now came forward and greeted my companion very effusively, and myself cordially though with more

formality. We all walked toward the house. On looking back I saw that the board fence within which we had alighted was high enough to exclude prying eyes, and as we left it, the newcomer, whom I saw to be a negro, turned and locked the door. The two men, indicating to me that I was to take a seat and wait until they returned, walked away together among the trees. I found an armchair just inside the door, and seated myself. The room was empty and barely furnished, and on a shelf beside the door was a single burning candle. I had not long to wait for the men presently returned, and the negro and myself were shown into a back room, where two beds invited us to repose. We both threw ourselves down as we were, without removing our clothing, and were soon fast asleep.

When I awoke it was broad daylight. The clouds had blown over and the sun was shining brightly. My companion was already up and busily arranging for our departure. I saw that he had changed his attire, and now he looked like any other colored man of intelligence and position. I rose, washed my face and hands, brushed my hair and went out of doors. The men had finished their business, whatever it was, and now we proceeded to the shore, entered a small boat, and the host of the island rowed us over to the mainland,

where, a few minutes later, we took a train for the city.

The few hours of sleep had done wonders for my companion. Whereas the night before, when we arrived he had seemed very tired and dull, so exhausted, in fact, that I was somewhat alarmed, now he was quite fresh and chipper, and seemed to have recovered all his elasticity of body and mind, looking and behaving much more like a man of forty than one of eighty-five. In fact, I was disposed to think he had been drawing a long bow when he gave me his age.

"We shall have to go back to-night," he said, almost as soon as we were comfortably settled in our seats. "I have learned that the invasion is to take place forthwith and the fleet of transports with the army on board left a week ago. By this time they must be nearing our coast. I am surprised that we did not see them, but they probably went straight across and then along down on the other side. But we must get there before they do, at any cost."

I did not make any direct reply to this remark, but proceeded to satisfy my own curiosity by inquiring about our landing place and our host of the night before.

"He is one of our familiar agents here," was the reply. "We have them all about. We are

compelled, for the present, and have been in the past, to keep in touch with the outside world through such agents as this one. There are a few scattered negroes here and in South America, descendants of those who did not join in the great migratory movement when we went to Africa, but the solidarity of the race has subsisted, and we can always depend upon them for correct information about any hostile movement directed against us. Nothing else that the whites may do is of any interest to our people, but it is important that we should be forewarned on occasions like this. That man is the owner of the small island where we landed, and supports himself by fishing and agriculture. The structure into which we descended is kept in good order by him, and is always empty and ready for me. I never send word that I am coming, but just now, at this juncture, he has been expecting me and watching for me every night for a week, for, of course, I never come in the daytime. Meanwhile he had been collecting information, so that he was able to tell me in a few minutes all that I required to know."

"How are we going to spend the day?" I anxiously inquired.

"We cannot stay long in New York," he replied; "I must go to Washington for a brief stop, and then we will return to Africa. Perhaps you

would like to remain over in New York while I go on."

Now, strange as it may seem, I was actually terrified at the idea of staying for hours, by myself, in the city I knew so well, which had been my home for so many years. I had begun to feel such a profound respect and absolute reliance upon this negro, and even, I am almost ashamed to say, such an affection for him, that I could not bear the idea of being left alone. Besides the city was likely to appear strange to me. I should meet no one I knew. The whole aspect of the world had altered for me within the short space of two days. And although that seemed impossible, there were the bold facts, and notwithstanding what my memory and my common sense told me, I had seen and heard such things that I fairly did not know what I was and what I was not. No, I must cling to this man, until I came to myself, or until that full explanation which he had promised to make, had been unfolded to me.

"I will go with you," I said. "I can think of nothing that would detain me in New York. I am a being of the past and have no interests here now."

"Very well," he replied, with his old inscrutable smile, "then we will go right on."

And so we did. As we went through the city

I noticed that there were no elevated railroads, only surface tracks and subways, and the streets were much brighter, cleaner and handsomer than they used to be in my time. There were few lofty buildings, also, and the city seemed to have extended laterally, with a sky line in every direction less ragged and irregular than it was in former days.

On our way to Washington I took occasion to ask about the other nations who had occupied the old world since the " great expulsion," and learned that they were living quietly at peace among themselves, and although they were all subject to governments still, and were therefore behind the negroes in the race toward the great goal, they traded much with one another with no artificial restrictions, and their relations were entirely amicable. They had a way of settling their difficulties through an international court, and they kept up their armies and navies solely as a means of warding off possible aggression by the whites, although the latter having never forgotten the terrible lesson they had received, were rather wary of the Chinese and Japanese, though still retaining some of their ancient contempt for the negro. Then, too, Europe and Asia, to their mind, had already been exploited for ages, and, as they thought, pretty well robbed of material resources before

they were driven out, whereas they were disposed to look upon Africa as still a virgin field, with untold wealth in mineral and vegetable resources, going to waste all these centuries on account of the indolence and ignorance of "those confounded niggers."

"So much they know of my people," he said bitterly. "Well," he continued, with a sigh, "they will have another cruel lesson soon.

"And now, on their own side of the ocean," he continued, "they all retain their quarrelsome and jealous dispositions and their insatiate greed. Look at those men in the opposite seats, rich, self-satisfied clutchers of everything within their reach and some things beyond. Do you understand what they are saying?"

The men he referred to were men of an ordinary type, such as I had seen by the thousand in other days, sleek, fat, well fed, well clothed, red faced and self-important. They had been engaged in conversation since we entered the car, and one of them, having become a little excited, had raised his voice so that I heard him plainly, and this is what he said, as nearly as I could gather from the strangeness of his pronunciation:

"I say yes. Come in with us on the ground floor. Our syndicate is bound to have the biggest slice."

A demur from the other.

"Nonsense. Everything is bound to go through slick enough. All that talk is buncombe. Our troops are there or nearly there by this time, and there can't be much opposition. Our ancestors were scared off to be sure, but they hadn't the facilities for such work that we have. You read, I suppose, that Prof. Humdrum has proved that all that voodoo business is scientifically impossible. There will be no trouble. Take a few shares while they are cheap. Our company is going to work over toward the center and a little east of it. They say most of the gold is there —"

And the conversation died away again into a murmur.

"Yes, I understand him," I said.

"Dividing us up already," he replied with a bitter smile and turned the subject.

"As I was saying, the whites keep up their old habits, and go on manufacturing more than they need, accumulating food that they cannot eat, textiles they cannot wear, machinery they cannot use, merchandise they have no room for, and instead of allowing the poor and starving and freezing portion of their community any share of these good things, bend all their energies to disposing of the surplus abroad. But a similar condition of things exists in all the other nations, and so we

have the singular spectacle of each of the white nations insisting even with threats of force, that other nations shall buy the surplus stuff, and imposing unconscionable tariff barriers to prevent other nations from selling to them. Meanwhile the poor in all these nations, those who need the articles that one party is so determined to sell, and the other so determined not to buy, are starving and dying of want. Was there ever such a coil before? And they all call themselves Christians. Do you suppose this state of things could endure for a moment longer if they were all Christians at heart? Imagine our Lord, whom they all worship and profess to look upon as a master and a guide, imagine him, I say, coddling the rich, neglecting and despising the poor, talking about the unfit and the submerged tenth, and hot in the chase after gold with all these humbugs. It nauseates me to look at them and hear them talk. And charity and good works. What is that but giving back a minute portion of their hoarded surplus to those from whom they wrenched it in the first place?"

These were the bitterest words I had ever heard from my philosophical friend and made me feel a little uncomfortable. I made no attempt to reply, for nothing I could say would affect his views, and I was disposed to attribute the sudden outburst of phlegm to the fact of his finding him-

self in an alien and hostile environment, in the country of the hereditary and long hated enemies of his race. So I remained silent during the remainder of the journey.

We were not long at the Capitol. My friend finished his business in about an hour, which I spent in looking in shop windows and watching the passers by in the streets where his duties, whatever they were, called him, and we soon were back in New York, where we took a subway train the length of the city and under the river to Long Island. During this short trip I was sometimes amused and at other times provoked by his running comments upon what his roving and ever watchful eyes noted in the car where we occupied seats.

"Look at all these advertisements," he would say; "the frantic attempts of all sorts of people to entice other people into buying a lot of things of which they do not feel the lack. There is one of a bargain sale. Someone has a lot of truck that he has never been able to dispose of to his customers, stuff that has been left on his hands because everyone who has seen it has considered it undesirable, and he makes this last grand struggle to pass it along to someone else before he throws it in the ragbag. An immense waste of energy to make people buy, buy, buy, when they already have all they need. And there is one about the

newest fashion. What are the fashions? And why are they constantly changing? Not because they are progressively more beautiful, more becoming, or more appropriate, for they are often quite the opposite. No, it is because these demon-driven manufacturers must keep on producing and are obliged to work off their product. But who gets the product in the end? The persons who work and make it? Those who need it? Those who are really cold and hungry? Oh, no. Those who already have all they want, but are deluded with the idea that they must have a change. All these new things are not for those who need them, but for those to whom they are a bother and a nuisance.

"And do these people here enjoy this chase after money and constant hunt for something new? No, excepting that it gives them something to do, and distracts their attention from themselves, for they have no inward resources of enjoyment. They cannot think. They bore themselves so when they are alone, and find solitude so miserable, that they go out to bore others and lose themselves in company. Look at the faces along the opposite side of the car. How unhappy they all are! See those ladies there, one talking and the other listening, and both smiling. How animated and cheerful their expression!

You would think they were both most happy and contented. Now look. They have stopped talking for a moment, and their faces take on their habitual expression. How sad they are! Their real souls shine through the mask. Now they are at it again, laughing and nodding like two merry chatterboxes of girls. See that poor thin, miserable, half-starved woman near the end, with a sad, old faced child in her arms, and then a little farther on that rotund person in fashionable attire, with his diamond pin and gold-headed cane. He has been lunching with friends, and seems very well satisfied with himself. Probably they spent enough for their luncheon to have fed that poor woman and her boy for six months. It is likely that he thinks he had a fine time and enjoyed himself hugely. Perhaps he did. And yet he undoubtedly has his moments of reflection. Look at his paunch and his mottled jowls. I would give him about two years more to live.

"And yet in your abundance of food, some of you never have enough, while the vast majority eat too much. Glance around this car. Those who have been able to stow away the surplus get fat, and those who cannot are dyspeptic and lean, so that almost every man or woman among you above the age of forty is either a tub or a beanpole. You live in a sad world. But here we

are," and we left the subway and passed on to our train.

As soon as we were seated he turned to me and said:

"One thing more I think I ought to say to you, in the nature of a warning. Your people are gradually losing their vitality by their ignorant and indiscriminating use of electrical devices. With currents overhead and currents underneath, flowing in every direction, and the induced currents that are excited by them, your communities are continuously permeated by electrical forces, which you have distributed so carelessly that you are dislocating the natural equilibrium of that force in your environment, to which your bodies have, so to speak, been attuned and accommodated through untold ages, and you are already beginning to pay the penalty of your recklessness in this respect in your increasing nervousness and irritability and general physical deterioration. Tell your countrymen, when you go back to them, to be warned in time."

"But you also use electricity quite as extensively as we do, do you not?"

"No. We use it very little and then only upon occasion. Our facilities for generating and directing it are always ready, but we can create or abolish the current at any moment, while the

exigencies of your manner of living demand its continuous generation, and you are constantly surrounded by and bathed in conflicting currents that are metaphorically tearing your nerves to pieces."

The remainder of our journey was passed in silence excepting that when we were about half way he roused himself sufficiently from a profound meditation to say:

" Pardon me for my bitter words spoken in the subway. They were very unchristian. I am ashamed of having uttered them, but when I am surrounded by your people the old race feeling asserts itself, and I could not help it. I am very sorry. Forget what I have said in the heat of my indignation."

And as he settled down again in his seat he murmured to himself, but so that I caught his words:

" And yet all I said was true, God help them."

CHAPTER XVII

THE CATASTROPHE

AT the landing we found the skiff waiting for us and in a few minutes we were back again on the island and preparing to leave. Food and drink had already been stowed away for the journey, and at the suggestion of my companion I took my seat as before. He remained a few moments in earnest conversation with the owner of the hut, and then received from him a considerable amount of the money of the country, giving him in exchange several weighty nuggets of gold and silver. Entering the hut for a few minutes he soon emerged in his own proper attire. Then he made his inspection of the machine, going over every part of it as carefully and minutely as before, took his seat beside me, nodded good-by to his friend, and we mounted in the air.

We rose with great velocity, so as to elude observation as soon as possible, and started on our return trip. It was already twilight, and we probably got away unnoticed. Again we had favorable weather, and although there was a little wind,

and the skies were not entirely free from clouds, it promised to be a pleasant trip and one without incident.

"We ought to reach home by six o'clock in the morning," he remarked, as he bent himself to the task of keeping our craft to her course.

There was little said during the return journey, and there is little to be said about it here. We went through without mishap, and it was practically a repetition of the trip out. I slept a good deal of the time during the day we spent over the ocean, and during both of the nights I was entirely oblivious of the world. Toward morning of the second night I was aroused by a touch upon my arm, and opening my eyes I found that dawn was just beginning, and I could see in the east a faint glimmer of light breaking in upon the gray pall that covered the sky. In the distance I could barely discern outlines of the land, and we were evidently rapidly nearing home. Home! A strange word, indeed, for me to use, at such a time, but that was the way I looked upon it, odd as it may appear. What other home had I now?

As we sped on toward the rising sun, it became lighter very rapidly, and as we approached the coast we saw the immense fleet of transports and convoys already at anchor and landing their troops and supplies. The work appeared to be about

completed, for several large bodies of men could be seen in the distance already on the march.

"They are losing no time," said my friend, who had the eye of a hawk; "they have sent the artillery ahead long ago. See them, do you, on the horizon?"

But I could see nothing of them and said so.

"They are not more than twenty miles or so from our frontier," he added, "and will probably be there by noon or shortly after. In fact, I should not be surprised if some of the force were already confronting us, and had taken up their positions. We have no time to lose."

"How large an army do you suppose they have?"

"I have learned that there are about two hundred thousand of all arms in the expedition," was the reply. "That being considered ample to take possession of the territory they covet and bear down all opposition."

"And how do you propose to meet such a force?"

"That you will see. I had hoped that you might be spared the worst, but if they are obstinate, your nerves will need bracing to witness the consequences without collapsing yourself."

"Nonsense," I replied. "I can stand anything I am likely to see."

We were now near the coast, and our craft had evidently been seen, for many of the officers and men were stretching their necks to look up in our direction, and we heard a few rifle shots as we passed over them, and I thought I heard the whistle of bullets. The negro showed not the slightest concern, however, and we kept our course like an arrow.

"It makes no difference here whether we are seen or not," he said; "they will procure no information that they will ever be able to take home."

In a few moments we were hovering over the place from which we started four days before, and settled down gently behind the house. We both went in to refresh ourselves after our long journey and my host retired to his room for a short rest, while I, who had all the sleep I needed on the way, went out-of-doors to see what was going on. I knew no one, and could talk with no one around me, and nobody, after the first glance, paid me the slightest attention, and so I seated myself on a bench in the open air, and looked about with interest at the busy population of the place. Naturally they were all in a state of excitement, and were running aimlessly about like ants in an ant hill, I thought; meeting, talking, separating, with a continual buzz, buzz, buzz, that clearly indicated

their curiosity and interest in pending events. Boys and girls darted here and there with messages, and the older people, while graver and more composed, yet showed traces of apprehension and dismay. They did not all, it appeared to me, possess the extreme confidence of my host, and I myself, notwithstanding the marvels that I had witnessed, did not feel sure that they were all practical in their application, and particularly on such an extensive scale as would be required in the conflict that seemed to be imminent. While I was weighing the chances in my own mind, my companion made his appearance, and beckoning to me, started down toward the public square. I followed and soon caught up with him, and we walked on together to the camera building.

On our way, the negro informed me that a messenger had been sent with a flag of truce to the camp of the enemy, with a demand that the expedition be abandoned and the forces withdrawn from the country, and the threat that noncompliance would entail the most terrible consequences, and that few of them could hope to escape unscathed. The messenger had just returned with a most contemptuous and derisive refusal and a counter demand for instant surrender.

"Poor fools!" he murmured. "They do not know."

As we passed along, I noticed at frequent intervals small heaps of some brownish material and here and there poles had been erected, bearing upon their tops bundles of the same stuff. I could also see in various directions small spheres floating in the air without apparent support, like toy balloons.

We had now arrived at the camera building and entered the same apartment I had been in before. The old man, venerable and dignified, was already there and the two friends greeted each other effusively. Some changes had been made in the interval of my visits. The furniture, simple as it had been, was gone, and the entire floor space was open so that movement was free in any direction. The roof had been removed, and the building was now open to the sky, and fully exposed to wind, sun and rain. At one side, near the wall, was a long row of knobs or buttons, which I had not noticed before, and therefore took to be recently put there. Otherwise things were unaltered.

After a short talk between the friends, the central knob was manipulated by the old man, and although the midday sun was blazing down upon us, the picture on the wall was as vivid as ever. We could see the camp of the enemy with the greatest clearness and in every detail, and ob-

served that their guns were already in position to begin a bombardment. As I gazed intently upon the scene, there rose all along the border line machines like that in which we made our over sea journey, and from them or rather from horizontal connecting lines that extended along the entire front hung other lines touching the earth. Slowly and majestically rose these curious craft, while the trailing lines unwound behind them, until they were above the range of missiles and then they halted and remained suspended in the air. This phenomenon evidently surprised the military men, and they were considerably nonplussed at first, for we saw them gathering in knots and using their glasses, while they consulted together in some confusion. After a while they were apparently reassured and went on briskly with their preparations for serious business.

Presently puffs of white vapor were visible where the guns were located. Firing had begun. Now I saw the meaning of the line of flyers with their drooping attachments. They were the first line of defense. The shells could never pass their line. That I knew from what I had seen of that peculiar mechanism. But to my surprise, as the firing increased in rapidity and volume, there were explosions and showers of dust not far away from where we were, and in another moment

something burst immediately overhead. I was astonished and dismayed. Can it be, I thought, that their vaunted protective measures are futile, after all? But almost immediately the truth flashed upon me. These explosions were caused by the little heaps and floating spheres that I had observed and were a trick to deceive the enemy and lead them to suppose their shots had taken effect. I could see them watching the path of the shells, evidently losing sight of them as they reached our line, and then turning toward one another with a nod of satisfaction as they saw the explosions in the air and on the ground, and detected the clouds of dust that were constantly being thrown up. The bombardment was incessant for nearly two hours, and meanwhile there had been no return from our side. The enemy were evidently perplexed and began to hold consultations again. At this point the flyers began to descend slowly toward the ground, retiring to the rear as they did so, and the enemy, perceiving the movement, ceased their artillery fire, and awaited developments. They did not halt long, but quickly concluded that our side had been cowed and would be an easy prey. There had been no counter fire and there were no fortifications or defensive works of any kind, so far as they could detect, and it soon became evident, from their actions, that they were getting ready

for an assault in force. Their columns were rapidly brought forward and the entire army seemed to be advancing to attack. What, I wondered, would the negroes do now? My companion was as calm and cool as ever, but the old man who, during the bombardment had been extraordinarily alert and active for so old a person, darting from one side to the other and pressing the knobs which evidently produced the detonations I had heard, was now perfectly still, but leaning forward a little, with his hand upon a long lever that I had not previously noticed, for it had lain in contact with the wall, and being painted or colored in the same shade, had been inconspicuous. Now he had pulled it out a trifle, and stood like a statue, awaiting developments.

At this moment my friend leaned over to me and whispered, as if he were in fear of disturbing or distracting the attention of the other:

"Be all attention. When you hear a loud hissing noise, cover your eyes, or you will go blind."

We waited in breathless suspense. On came the soldiers who were now near our line, and were beginning to advance at a double quick step. Suddenly I heard music, singing voices, giving forth surely the sweetest, mournfullest and saddest strains that ever fell on mortal ear. My companion whispered:

"It is the women and children singing a dirge for your countrymen."

Tears came into my eyes. What's that? A loud long hiss. I threw my coat over my face and covered my eyes with my hands. There was a blinding white flash that seemed to flood the air around us, a sudden silence, and then a roar, the most tremendous noise I think that ever shook the earth. I felt the ground tremble. An earthquake. I was bewildered and threw off my coat. Silence. The negroes were standing like statues. And then I saw, horror of horrors, that before me where a moment ago had been rushing armies of active men, brimming with the joy of life and eager for combat and glory, were blackened sticks and stumps, distorted beyond conception and looking like the charred remains of a forest fire.

I was stiff with horror. And then the heavens were opened, and down came torrents of rain. Even as I gazed, the blackened forms melted away, beaten down by the falling deluge into indistinguishable mud over the surface of the plain.

Before I could recover from this dreadful shock, to my great astonishment my calm and dignified friend, who had never more than smiled, burst into a coarse guffaw, and clapping me on the shoulder, shouted in my ear:

"Do the crops a lot of good, hey!"

I whirled round in amazement, and found myself gazing upon the mild, blue eyes and wagging chin whiskers of my New Hampshire landlord, who was shaking with laughter.

"Gee whillikins, that was a soaker. You are wet to the skin. I'd no idee you was here. Come along down to the house and git dried off."

. . . . . .

And even yet my memory often harks back to that happy valley and contented people, and then I wonder —

. . . .

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